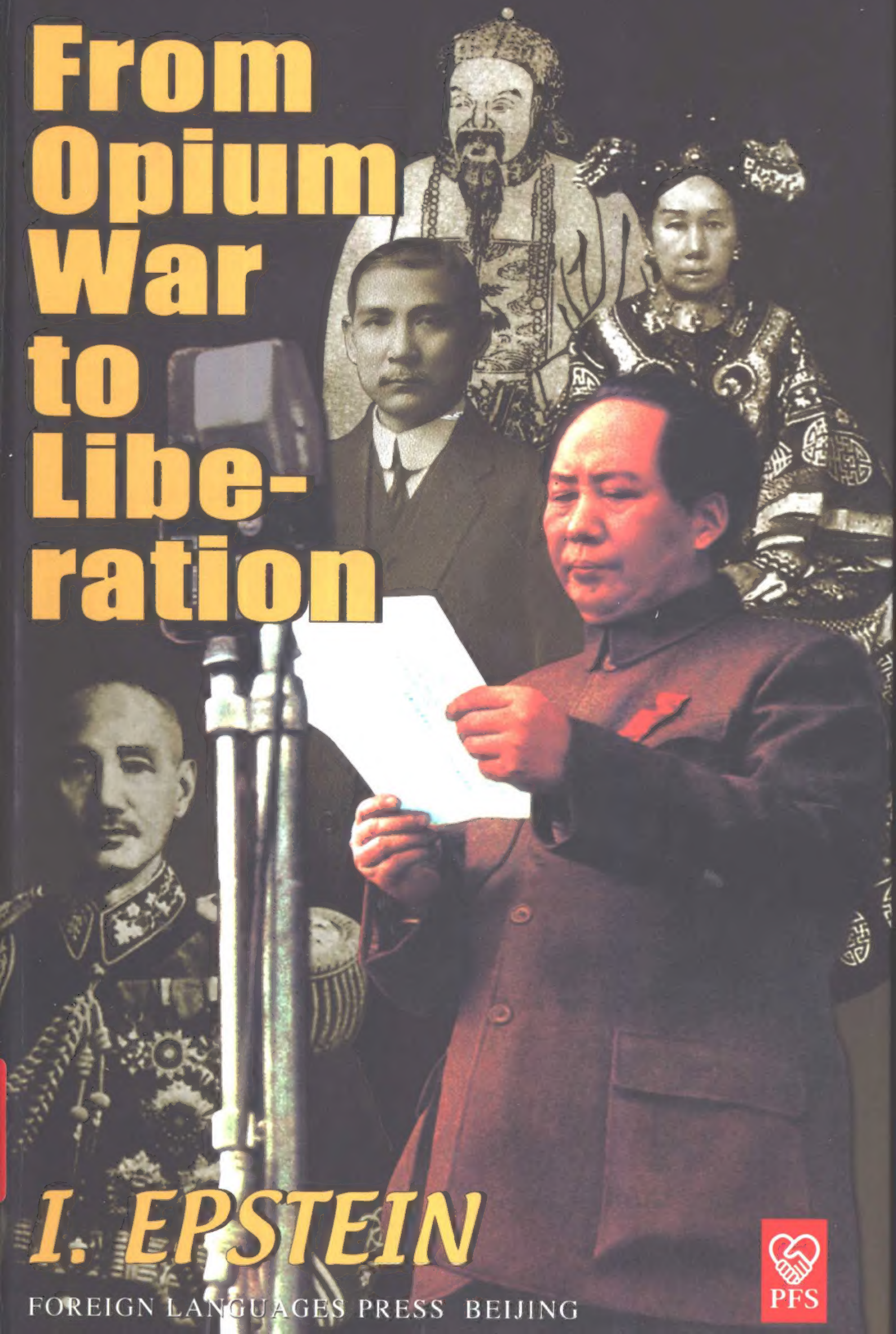


From Opium War to Libe- ration



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Israel Epstein

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FROM OPIUM WAR TO LIBERATION

PREFACE

Huang Hua

It is a great honor for me to write a preface for the new, PFS (China Society for People's Friendship Studies) 50-book series under the general title of *Light on China*. All these books were written in English by journalistic and other eyewitnesses of the events described. I have read many of them over the seven decades since my student days at Yenching University. With some of the outstanding authors in this series I have ties of personal friendship, mutual regard, and warm memories dating from before the Chinese people's Liberation in 1949.

Looking back and forward, I am convinced that China is pursuing the right course in building a strong and prosperous country in a rapidly changing world with its complex and sometimes volatile developments.

The books in this series cover a span of some 150 years, from the mid 19th to the early 21st century. The numerous events in China, the sufferings and struggles of the Chinese people, their history and culture, and their dreams and aspirations were written by foreign

observers animated by the spirit of friendship, equality and cooperation. Owing to copyright matters and other difficulties, not all eligible books have as yet been included.

The founder of the first Chinese republic, Dr. Sun Yat-sen wrote in his Testament in 1925, "For forty years I have devoted myself to the cause of the people's revolution with but one end in view: the elevation of China to a position of freedom and equality among the nations. My experiences during those forty years have convinced me that to attain this goal we must bring about an awakening of our own people and ally ourselves in common struggle with those people of the world who regard us as equals."

Chairman Mao Zedong declared, at the triumphal founding of the People's Republic in 1949, "The Chinese people have stood up." Today, having passed its 53rd anniversary, we see the vast forward strides that have been taken, and note that many more remain to be made.

Many foreign observers have traced and reported the real historical movement of modern China, that is: from humiliation — through struggle — to victory. Seeking understanding and friendship with the Chinese people, their insight and perspective were in basic harmony with the real developments in China. But there have been others who viewed China and the Chinese people through glasses tinted by hostile prejudice or ignorance and have invariably made irrelevant observations that could not stand the test of time. This needs to be better understood by young people and students, at home and abroad. The PFS series *Light on China* can help them gain an overview of what went before, is happening now, and will

emerge in the future.

Young students in China can additionally benefit from these works by seeing how foreign journalists and authors use fluent English to record and present historical, philosophical, and socio-political issues and choices in China. For millions of students in China, English has become a compulsory second language. These texts will also have many-sided usefulness in conveying knowledge of our country to other peoples.

Students abroad, on their part, may be helped by the example of warm, direct accounts and impressions of China presented by their elders in the language that most readily reaches them.

Above all, this timely and needed series should help build bridges of friendship and mutual understanding. Good books long out of print will be brought back to strengthen the edifice.

My hearty thanks and congratulations go first to ex-Premier Zhu Rongji, who has been an effective supporter of this new, PFS series. They go to all engaged in this worthy project, the Foreign Languages Press, our China Society for People's Friendship Studies, and others who have given their efforts and cooperation.

Chairman Mao Zedong has written: "So many deeds cry out to be done, and always urgently. The world rolls on, time presses. Ten thousand years are too long. Seize the day, seize the hour."

The hour has come for making these books available to young people in China and abroad whose destiny is to build a better world together. Let this series add a small brick to that structure.

Beijing, Autumn 2003

PREFACE

At a time when our whole nation is celebrating the return of Hongkong, it is pleasing to hear that Israel Epstein's concise history, *From Opium War to Liberation*, is coming out in its fourth edition in English and first edition in Chinese.

Hongkong's return, an event of major significance in Chinese and international history, is promoting eagerness — among our compatriots in Hongkong and Taiwan and Chinese living abroad and among the public elsewhere in the world — to learn about China's road in the past 100 years and more — from humiliation, through struggle, to victory. And *From Opium War to Liberation* is most suitable to fill this need.

Why do I say "most suited", when such a multitude of books on modern Chinese history have been produced both at home and abroad? Not only is its size convenient. More importantly, the author writes with a penetrating understanding of world affairs and profound feeling for the Chinese people. These qualities, stemming from long and direct experience, make his book both convincing and moving. Its repeated publication attests to its effectiveness. Following the first English edition in 1956, enlarged and revised editions were printed in Beijing in 1964 and Hongkong in 1980.

And translations into ten languages, European and Asian, were brought out in China and abroad.

Epstein, born in a Jewish family in Poland, came to China with his parents at the age of two, spending his childhood and teens in a foreign enclave (“concession”) in Tianjin. There he attended American and British schools, receiving a Eurocentric education which extolled the “glories” of colonial aggression and consigned China’s language, history and culture to oblivion. Later, as he wrote, “personal experience as a journalist on China’s war fronts against Japanese aggression in the 1930’s and 40’s, contributed to my emancipation from such schooling — and a desire to place into historical context the things learned and unlearned.”

Seeking for truth, he delved into the historical record, and visited many people and places. On a group journey to Yan’an in 1994, which broke a window in a long-continued blockade by the Kuomintang, he interviewed many leaders of the Chinese Communist Party including Mao Zedong, Zhu De and Zhou Enlai. Then he went on to witness the bases of guerrilla resistance behind the lines of the invading Japanese. Already years earlier, in 1938, he had joined the China Defense League founded by Soong Ching Ling, (Mme. Sun Yat-sen), beginning a half-century of joint work and friendship with that great woman who devoted herself wholly to inheriting and developing Sun Yat-sen’s revolutionary cause.

In short, Epstein’s understanding of China and its hundred years of revolution is genuine and convincing — and he came to his conclusions both through historical study and real life.

Moreover, with his knowledge of languages, own cultural background and painstaking diligence — Epstein has searched through more foreign historical writings than most Chinese authors and made effective use of them as the reader will see from many examples.

History is forging ahead. The days of the old colonialism are gone, as the return of Hongkong prominently signals. Yet ideas rooted in the colonial period hang on for a long time, or re-emerge in new guise. There are still persons who defend defunct colonialism, think China's only way forward is to "westernize", and the like. So it is important to uncover and comprehend the main track of China's 100-year historical development, and the inevitability of the choice to build a socialist country with Chinese characteristics as charted by Deng Xiaoping. Conducive to this understanding are the extensive "author's introduction" and "postscript", especially written for the new edition. They will help the reader, after the narrative of a century of history in the main text, to evaluate current trends of thought stemming from that history.

Epstein is my good friend whom I admire. He upholds the truth, and continues to work with his accustomed conscientious and diligent energy though now over eighty. I warmly congratulate him on this new edition, and am very happy that he accepted my suggestion of a translation to meet the needs of Chinese readers. I also thank Fu Jiaqin, a veteran translator, likewise advanced in age, and physically handicapped, who gladly accepted the arduous task of putting the book into Chinese and accomplished it with high quality in a short time. Finally I am grateful to the staff of the China Today Press for their successful effort to publish on time.

Let us once more hail the restitution of Hongkong! May the new edition of *From Opium War to Liberation* add its spark to the joyous fireworks of the celebration.

* * *

The above was written in 1997. The present 1998 English edition is brought out, as was the Third Edition in 1980 by the Joint Publishing Co. of Hongkong. Some technical errors have been noted and corrected. The for-

mat is suited for an extended market. Its publication coincides, happily, with the 60th anniversary of the China Defence League founded by Soong Ching Ling (Mme. Sun Yat-sen) in Hongkong in 1938, during the War of Resistance against Japanese invasion. The founding of the League (now the China Welfare Institute) was a significant event in the history of Chinese patriotism in Hongkong. The author, Israel Epstein, is now the only survivor of the League committee in its opening year. But the book is not just an anniversary edition but for readership for years to come. For undertaking the present edition, I add my thanks and congratulations to the Joint Publishing Co.

Huang Hua

April 1997

and

April 1998

Beijing

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

From Opium War to Liberation was first published in Beijing in 1956 and in enlarged and revised editions here in 1964, and in Hongkong in 1980. The present — 1997 — edition is the fourth. Its predecessors, over the years, were translated and published in China and abroad in Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, German, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, and Urdu. A reprint of the original English appeared in India.

People from the Third World seemed most responsive to the book. An unexpected number, when meeting me for the first time, said they knew it.

Readers included national leaders. Soong Qing Ling — Madame Sun Yat-sen — then Vice-Chairperson of the People's Republic of China — who liked the book, also wrote me in 1961, "When I met Ghana's Kwame N'Krumah... he praised it most warmly."*

Among western writers on China, Edgar Snow called it "... a masterful job of condensation of a big (very big) subject — presented from a point of view seldom heard around these parts."**

These reactions are cited not in self-praise but to show that this brief book did do something to fulfil its purpose. It never aimed at being a full account of China's century of crucial change — that would have taken a

* Letter, Soong Qing Ling to author, November 10, 1961.

** Letter, Snow to author, May 25, 1958.

whole library. It was intended, as Snow perceived, as a voice “seldom heard” — to help Western-educated people (not just those of Western origin but many on all continents who had been schooled under colonial influence) to “shift gears” from what they had been taught as history to what they had not been taught. In short, to awaken them to the need for “reversing the reversal of history,” in Mao Zedong’s graphic phrase, and direct their attention to rock-bottom realities.

As bridges to this re-focussing, many older English-language accounts — which unlike sources in Chinese the readers could check for themselves — were dug into for self-revealed evidence of aspects not only of Chinese but of Western history which had been habitually obscured. Among these was the impact of imperialism not just on China and other invaded lands but on the peoples of the imperialist countries themselves. And also, importantly, the mutual support, sometimes conscious and sometimes historically implicit, of the past progressive struggles of both.

Work on the book helped this author’s own re-education. Growing up in a foreign-administered and garrisoned enclave in old China, I had been taught in the European-centered manner of those days or, in plain words, stuffed with the self-justifications — indeed self glorifications — of colonialist aggression. In the British school I attended in my teens in China, we did not have even a minute’s instruction in her language, much less her history and culture. By contrast, the British concession in Tianjin where we lived, streets bore names in memory of foreign invaders of China and suppressors of Chinese national and social uprisings — Elgin, Gordon, Seymour and the like — as did the “houses” of our school. This nomenclature was a daily insult to the country on whose soil we were.

Changes in the world, and personal experience as a journalist on China’s war fronts against Japanese aggression in the 1930’s and 40’s, contributed to my emancipation from such schooling — and a desire to place into historical context the things learned and unlearned.

To spark a similar reappraisal by readers seemed necessary when this book first appeared in the 1950’s. Since then the illusion-dispelling work has

been done, better than by books, by major global shifts. One was the further rise of the new China. Another was the chain reaction of national liberation and decolonization struggles in what is now termed the Third World. That the pre-war colonial empires would have lasted much longer if not for the China's great breakthrough cannot be seriously disputed.

The writing of China's history in English also changed. No longer was it so blatantly Eurocentric. Authors who knew Chinese and could go directly to Chinese sources ceased to be the exception. Yet the new crop, too, often inclined toward imperialism and the overthrown ruling classes of old China. Leading "Pekinologists" bewailed China's alleged misfortune in having missed out on the "normal" road of capitalism. Things would have been different... if only. If only, in the 19th and early 20th centuries China's initial advocates of Westernization had found some base in the officialdom of her last monarchic dynasty. Or if only, at a later date, the United States had backed certain private banks instead of the Kuomintang's semi-feudalism bureaucrat-capitalism and Chiang Kai-shek. And more in similar vein.

Academics by now equipped not only with knowledge of Chinese but with access to computerized data banks, industriously sifted the archives for grounds for their desired "if onlys." What most avoided was the root reason why what actually happened was so different — China's Marxist-led revolution and launching on the socialist road.

To this, such scholars have conceded at most a temporary inevitability. Sooner or later, they have argued, China must take the capitalist road in one form or another. To their minds, it is the only normal avenue of long-term development, especially industrial development — all else seems aberration. Socialism itself, in one fashionable view, is merely a mode of capital formation for countries where large private capital did not accumulate, and hence destined to evaporate after doing that job. The motive for such research, and certainly for the official and corporate grants it has readily received, seems to be a desire to make socialism vanish more quickly both as theory and as practice. Tunes of this kind have been played ever louder since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

But such analysts carefully turn their eyes away from one basic fact — that it was world capitalism itself, in its imperialist state, that blocked the capitalist road for China and similar countries, making all the historical “if onlys” into impossibilities. The socialist road became the normal choice for China through the defeat of all other alternatives in actual practice — over more than a hundred years.

In the times when foreign “great powers” dominated China, especially the earlier times, imperialist chroniclers often did not bother to conceal the bullyings and cruelties of colonial aggression and rule — which they regarded as matters of right by self-styled superior races over “lesser breeds.” Only later, when they were put on the defensive by social and national revolutions, did they begin to shame-facedly admit some evils. But even when recognizing the legitimacy of victorious revolutions they persisted in their plea that the empire-builders were mainly well-meaning. Today one encounters even an open nostalgia — after an interval during which it had become publicly unseemly — for old-style colonialism. Was it as oppressive and exploitative as painted by opponents? Rather, its apologists contend, there were good intentions and generally good results, marred by bungling and blindness (on both sides — those of the foreign rulers and the nation they ruled) that led to avoidable collisions. Most to blame — in their barely concealed opinion — were those who rose against foreign rule.

The latest (1990s) twist is the much discussed philosophic-historical thesis of Harvard Professor Samuel Huntington who pictures the next great war as not between nations and political ideologies but between cultures — the white man’s and that of peoples of other colors. This concept, as one witty American critic warned, means “retreating to our Eurocentric womb.” Or to racism, to give it its correct name. Parts of Huntington’s book were dignified by reproduction in *Foreign Affairs*, the most prestigious U.S. journal on international policy. So the battle for understanding is far from over.

The present edition of *From Opium War to Liberation*, in English and in Chinese translation, comes at the time of a new forward step in real history, the restoration of Chinese sovereignty in Hongkong. This auspicious event

rights a crying historical wrong — Britain's seizure of the area in the Opium War of 1839-42 which ushered in a century of successive unjust wars and humiliating unequal treaties that violated China's territory and sovereign rights and almost extinguished her as a nation. But that same century was one of patriotic arousal of the Chinese people to heroic and protracted struggles which can be summed up as their revolution against imperialism and feudalism or more simply as China's hundred-year war of independence — because without independence there could be no other progress. The main text of the book, beginning with the Opium War, ends with the Liberation — the decisive triumph of the Chinese revolution in 1949 when the People's Republic of China was proclaimed and, in Mao Zedong's words, "the Chinese people have stood up."

But the consequences of China's having been trampled on for so long did not thereby all disappear. Recovery of Hongkong came almost 50 years after the 1949 victory. It is the result of the subsequent self-strengthening of China in all fields — and of the policy of one nation, two systems, enunciated by Deng Xiaoping. These two elements will also make possible the reunification of Taiwan with the mainland. Both Hongkong and Taiwan are expected to remain capitalist for another half-century. But on the mainland the building of socialism is to be persisted in and perfected.

Parenthetically, the "if onlys" school of Western Pekinologists had, from the 1960's on, their Soviet counterparts. These bewailed the misfortune of China's revolution in having departed from their version of "normal" road — the more or less carbon-copying of the Russian revolution and the Soviet state it created as advocated by Wang Ming and his like. That course, history's hard facts proved, led to many defeats and, if persisted in, would have pushed China toward dependence in a new context.

History has shown that there can be no stereotyped model of any society — professing similar ideals, much less dissimilar ones — to suit all nation-states. Their circumstances vary. So, accordingly, must the respective methods and detailed forms of their development, shaped by their locations in geographical space and historical past and present. The future will prove, this

writer believes, that the crack-up of the former Soviet Union was not the downfall of socialism in general but of one particular model which thought itself compulsorily universal, something that no model can ever be. What is universal is the supplanting of a given system by another in society's forward motion.

China has taken her own road to socialism. It is longer and more complex than was thought. Though her economy is mixed, she does not equate modernization with privatization. The goal is to build a socialist society in the modern world. Foreign investment is welcome, and allowed due profit, because the country and its system can no longer be dominated or forced. China's hard-won sovereign, equal status ensures this and will not be bartered.

In international relations, too, China's socialist nature is evident. Old China could not repel or deter foreign aggression. The new China is armed only for these purposes. She has no troops or bases abroad, and belongs to no alliance. Her treatment of other countries, strong or weak, big or small, and whatever its social system, is equal and reciprocal.

Of all this more will be said in the "Postscript."

Now, back to history.

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I

OLD CHINA

The Chinese state and Chinese civilization go back thousands of years. In the course of their long history, the Chinese people produced many great fighters for national independence and social liberation, as well as distinguished natural scientists, inventors, engineers, philosophers, poets and military strategists. They were one of the first nations to advance material culture to a very high level. Their skilful farming provided the basis for a large population. Their best-known industrial and scientific inventions included paper, silk, gunpowder, the mariner's compass, printing and porcelain. In addition, China anticipated Europe by centuries in the use of:

Coal for fuel.

Deep drilling for salt and natural gas (on the principle now applied in oil fields).

The waterwheel-driven bellows in metal smelting.

The differential gear and clockwork in mechanics.

The stern-post rudder, watertight compartments and the paddle-wheel for ships.

Segmental-arch and suspension bridges and canal locks.

The seismoscope to detect earthquakes.

The abacus, a highly accurate value of π and the binomial theorem in mathematics.

The crossbow, cannon and gunpowder rocket in war. *

China's people began to work iron later than some others, but, owing partly to their pioneer employment of coal, they moved ahead very rapidly in this very important technique. The first century historian Pliny wrote that in the Rome of this day "the iron that came from China was considered the best."** The Roman name for China was *Serica*, the land of silk, testifying to the fame of her textiles, another article of trade between the two empires.

For nearly two thousand years, in fact, China's productive skills were ahead of the West's. And medieval travellers like Marco Polo marvelled at such evidence of advanced economic organization as the use of paper money, then unknown elsewhere (though Polo, a merchant interested in money, not culture, did not even mention the fact that these bills, as well as Chinese books, were reproduced by printing, an invention of crucial importance likewise still unheard of in Europe at the time). All visitors up to the end of the eighteenth century spoke of China in a tone of admiration for its advances.

But revolutionary changes in Europe soon proved that even the longest-established technical supremacy under the old social system, feudalism, could be quickly outpaced under a young one, such as capitalism then was. China, remaining under feudal landlord rule as for some 2,500 years past, quickly came to be classed as "backward." And western professors began their endless harping on Chinese and indeed all Eastern society being "static in nature."

This idea is unscientific and chauvinist. It was originally tailored to help capitalist imperialism portray ruthless aggression against Asia as the spreading of "civilization and progress." Later, in a new version, it was peddled by those who feared the now revolutionary East. One school has attacked the

* For much more on these and other inventions see Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge University Press), a carefully documented investigation, several volumes of which have been published since 1954.

** Pliny, *Historian Naturalis*, Vol. XXXIV, pp.41, 145. And in "The Development of Iron and Steel Technology in China" (London, 1958), Prof. Needham stated, "Between the 5th and the 17th centuries it was the Chinese, not the Europeans, who could make as much as they wanted of cast iron and who were accustomed to make steel by advanced methods quite unknown to the western world," and "nowhere in the medieval world except China was it possible to find relatively abundant supplies of cast iron and steel."

socialist system that must succeed capitalism everywhere as not progressive at all but a reincarnation of age-old "Oriental despotism"* based on a "hydraulic society" (i. e. born of the control of widespread irrigation works by an autocratic centralized state). Like Hitler's race theories, and pursuing similar aims, such concepts are meant to indoctrinate people with the notion that the forms of development of only one section of mankind have both virtue and value. Those of all the rest are seen as debased, "alien" and menacing. This is a very old political trick. Its aim has always been domination by the self-styled "superiors" over those dubbed "inferior," nothing to do with historical or any other science. More recently it has been to make the people of imperialist states forget questions of class power and of progress and reaction, common to all humanity and make them pliable tools in the hands of oppressors of "their own kind" that is, their own against the plain folk of other lands.

In actual fact, and contrary to such myths, China's development has followed the same general path as that of other societies. And her pace has at times been faster, as well as sometimes slower, than theirs. She emerged from primitive communal society (clan and tribal) to slavery, and from slavery to feudalism, centuries before Europe, and so was ahead. Then she stayed in feudalism twice as long as Europe, and so fell behind.

Now things have changed again. Instead of establishing capitalism and being saddled with it for hundreds of years like the western countries, China is making a very quick transition from the revolutionary overthrow of foreign imperialist control and internal feudalism to the position of a strong and modern socialist state. So today, in a broader social sense, it is the old capitalist world that suffers from "stagnation." (This is not to say, of course, that China in building socialism does not have, besides a centuries-old technological lag, the burden of mainly feudal, rather than capitalist, habits and traditions to overcome.)

* This was the theme song of K.A. Wittfogel, in the "cold war" period a pet "China historian" of imperialism. His thesis, starting from a distortion of Marx, replaced economic and social forces by geographical ones as the determinant of history. Wittfogel, originally a Communist, ended by goading McCarthyite witch hunters in the U.S. against his own academic colleagues.

As to why China's feudalism lasted so very long, her historians still do not claim to have the final answer. But the following causes have been much discussed.

First, there were the characteristics that mark all feudal societies regardless of their various outer forms.

The peasants themselves produced most of the handicraft articles they used; commodities did not circulate on a scale large enough to destroy the local self-supporting economy.

The huge rents collected by the landlord class went mainly to satisfy the appetites of its members and the needs of its rule. The latter included the pomp of the court, a swarm of officials, and many devastating frontier wars as well as wars to suppress the people at home. All this prevented any great growth of capital invested in industry and trade.

Second, and important, were some specific features of Chinese feudalism seen by some historians as follows:

The centralized state machine, headed by the emperor, took form very early. In China, unlike Europe, the central power did not gain supremacy through an alliance of the monarch and the nascent bourgeoisie in the cities. Instead, a vast imperial bureaucracy tightly organized from the capital down to the rural counties served the needs of the whole landlord class headed by the emperor. This bureaucracy did not form a distinct ruling group, as claimed by the exaggerators of the "Oriental society" concept into a proof of the "basically different" social nature of the East. It was a highly developed tool of feudalism — a system which, in both its Eastern and its Western forms, is characterized by a landed ruling class exploiting the peasantry through rent (or tribute) in labor, products or money.

In China, the towns were administered by the officials and garrisoned by the troops of her dominant landlord class. This left no opportunity for the growth of autonomous armed urban strongholds of the commercial and industrial capitalists, as did the mutual strife of local lords in Europe.

Whether the superstructure of Chinese feudalism is seen as “typical” for this order of society or as a “peculiar” and hardly recognizable form depends upon the angle from which one is looking, i.e. whether medieval Europe or old China is taken as the standard. What is certain is that the Chinese form was highly elaborate, and centralized to a degree hardly paralleled in any other large country. This also contributed to the system’s long life.

Some of the main branches of mining and manufacture, such as iron, salt, and to some extent silk and porcelain, and of trade such as that in tea and horses, were early monopolized by the landlord state. Merchants could operate in these fields only under licenses which the feudal authorities could revoke. Artisans in these controlled industries were mostly neither wage workers nor free craftsmen but wholly or partially state serfs. Merchants were low in political status and were generally excluded from key governing posts. So when they grew rich, their concern was often not to remain merchants but to get into the ruling landlord class and its bureaucracy.

Organized in this way, Chinese feudalism attached and subordinated the merchant and usurer to the landlord class, and welded all three into a close and stable trinity of exploiters. Thus cemented, it remained intact through many upheavals. It survived numerous economic crises as well as material advances — for China’s feudal economy and technology were not frozen or immobile, as witness the history of her science and invention. But ultimately the ingeniously built superstructure (the political and ideological system) could not immortalize the base (the economic and social system) which it had helped to keep going for such a long period. To draw a modern parallel, the British bourgeoisie’s ingenious compromise with the aristocracy, use of the monarchy and molding of a Labor Party whose Prime Ministers end up as Earls cannot endlessly preserve British capitalism. Similarly, U.S. capitalism will not be kept alive forever by the political game in which the Democratic and Republican parties — both firmly attached to monopoly capital — are presented as the only practicable channels of political activity for all strata of society, in order that the workers may not feel the need for their own party and power over the state. For whatever the exploiting society, and the political

subterfuges, the struggle between social classes cannot be crushed or wished out of existence and, when the conditions are ripe, accomplishes its historical task.

In old China, the basic revolutionary class was the peasantry which labored under the triple yoke of the landlords, merchants and usurers. It fought ceaselessly and heroically, and for centuries virtually alone against this consolidated oppressive force.

Mao Zedong, in his work, *The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party*, specifically mentions 17 great rural revolts, and refers to hundreds of others, big and small, ranging over 2,000 years. He has pointed out that "the gigantic scale of peasant uprisings and peasant wars in China is without parallel in the world" and that they "constituted the real motive force of historical development in Chinese feudal society." The reason these struggles were for so long unable to change the system, even when they overthrew dynasties and redistributed the land, was that material and social development had not yet brought a successor on the scene. For as all history proves, the peasants alone are unable to build a new type of society or state power. Until new classes have appeared and gathered strength, their assaults cannot smash feudalism. Up to the 20th century, this used to happen only with the rise of a bourgeoisie strong enough to ride to power on the wave of peasant rebellion and then to subjugate the peasants to its own exploiting system of capitalism. In today's world, however, a young working class can elbow aside the bourgeoisie and, leading the peasantry as its main ally, and steer on from the anti-feudal revolution to the ending of all exploitation of man by man, i.e. to socialism. This was the goal ultimately set in China. But before the conditions ripened, her peasant revolts were unable to transcend feudalism, though the blows they struck at the system stimulated productive and other advances and created rich revolutionary traditions for the final victorious battle against it when the time came.

This is not to say that, seeds of capitalism were absent in old China. They arose and multiplied, especially in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries. Commodity exchange developed to some extent. In the Ming dynasty (1368-

1644) feudal taxes and labor service were combined into a single money tax, payable in silver. Peasants were officially ordered to grow cotton; traders organized or financed weaving manufactories, sometimes with hundreds of workers in each. Foreign trade also developed to a certain degree. In the succeeding Qing dynasty (prior to the western aggressions) some 10,000 miners were working for wages in Guangxi province as were 50,000 weavers in Guangdong. Tea-processing was also done in large workshops, some employing 5,000 or more workers. The famous porcelain kilns of Jingdezhen (Jiangxi province) developed an elaborate division of labor. A relatively early banking and credit network existed in the "money houses" of Shanxi province, which operated in many parts of China, handled remittances and deposits, made loans and were sometimes revenue-collecting agents for the state.

All these phenomena furnished added proof that the sequence of social stages, as described by Marx, is the inherent tendency of all society, whether it be Oriental or Western. But their growth was delayed by the factors we have outlined. So it came about that the walls of China's feudal system were finally breached by foreign, not Chinese, capitalism. And as we shall see later, this very fact restricted and crippled the development of the latter.

After the middle of the eighteenth century, the British East India Company, fresh from the subjugation of India, became the leader in the lucrative "China trade." In this commerce, at the outset, China was the supplier of manufactures. She exported not only tea but silk, cotton textiles (nankeen cloth), porcelains and other finished goods. In return, she imported little — mainly such things as raw furs, medicinal roots and some choice foodstuffs for rich men's tables. The Emperor Qianlong wrote, in 1796, to King George III of England in reply to a proposal for more trade, "We possess all things. I set no value on things strange or ingenious and have no use for your country's manufactures."* There was truth in this, but also blindness. The feudal ruling class in China was fearful of change and of new ideas that might come from outside contact.

* Cited from an English translation. There is an almost identical wording in H.F. MacNair, *Modern Chinese History: Selected Reading*, Shanghai, 1927, Commercial Press, Ltd., p. 4-5.

It was at first entirely oblivious to the economic power and military menace which capitalist industrialization was beginning to unleash in the West, and took little interest in the new technology even for purposes of defense.

In the trade of those days, the British merchants could sell very little in China. For most of what they bought, they had to pay in solid silver. That silver had a blood-stained colonial history. Mined by American Indians working under the lash in Mexico and Peru, much of it had been paid to British slave-traders by the Spanish planters in Latin America for the purchase of black people kidnapped from Africa. Then it had been used by the British to buy fine cloths and spices in India. And finally, after the conquest of India, it had been squeezed back out of her people in enforced tribute. Thus, in the onward march of capitalism, the robbery and enslavement of one people was providing the means for the robbery and enslavement of others.

II

OPIUM, WARSHIPS AND MISSIONARIES (1840-1849)

Because the supply of silver was not inexhaustible, the British East India Company was looking for another way to pay for Chinese goods. It deliberately chose opium. How it got its stocks was described by a contemporary eyewitness in India:

In all the territories belonging to the Company the cultivation of the poppy, the preparation of the drug, and the traffic in it until it is sold at auction for exportation are under a strict monopoly The cultivation of the plant is compulsory.... Vast tracts of the very best land in Benares, Bihar and elsewhere in the northern and central parts of India are now covered with poppies; and the other plants used for food or clothing, grown from time immemorial, have nearly been driven out.*

In 1781, after systematic preparation, the Company made its first big shipment of Indian opium to China where the drug had previously been little known. After this, the trade grew by leaps and bounds. Soon China's exports of tea, silk and other goods were not enough to pay for the imported opium, and silver began to flow out of the country instead of in.

* *Chinese Repository*, Vol. V (1837), p. 472, quoted in S. Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom*, New York and London, 1848.

In 1800, the Emperor Jiaqing, seriously disquieted by both the physical and economic effects of opium, banned it from China. But by this time too many people had formed the habit and too many merchants and officials had been corrupted by the profits from their partnership in the traffic. So smuggling and bribery virtually nullified the ban.

The annual import of opium grew from some 2,000 chests (of 140 to 160 lb. each) in 1800 to 40,000 chests in 1838. One may note that U.S. ships very early joined the British in the nefarious trade. They brought Turkish opium (loaded in Smyrna, now called Izmir) to supplement the Indian. Several mercantile fortunes, which later formed the basis of U.S. industrial development, were made in this way.

The outflow of silver from China increased to a torrent. In 1832-35 alone, 20 million ounces were shipped abroad. The price of the metal inside the country rose sharply. The burden fell on the peasants since grain prices became lower, while landlords and tax-collectors took a greater portion of the crop so their own income, in silver, would remain as great as before. This added to the strains on the feudal society of China, which were already so great that a new cycle of peasant revolts had begun in the middle of the eighteenth century. From 1810 on, risings against the Manchu dynasty became more frequent and widespread. In 1813, one group of insurgents penetrated into the imperial palace in Beijing itself.

In the interests of self-preservation, the Qing (Manchu) dynasty rulers in Beijing had to act. After issuing a sterner decree on the suppression of the opium trade, they appointed a resolute advocate of its prohibition, Lin Zexu, as special commissioner to Guangzhou. Supported by the people, Lin blockaded the section of the city in which British and American merchants had been allowed to set up their establishments. In this way he forced them to surrender the opium they had on hand — over 20,000 chests. On June 3, 1839 he publicly destroyed the whole lot.

The result was the First Opium War, in which both the predatory aims of the leading “civilized” states of the West and the backwardness and weakness of the outwardly majestic Chinese feudal empire were exposed to the Chinese people and the whole world. Between 1839 and 1842, British troops

landed at various points along the coast, occupied Guangzhou, Shanghai, Xiamen (Amoy) and Ningbo — and penetrated inland to cut the Imperial Grand Canal, the chief artery of trade between North and South China. Their advance was marked, at each step, by robbery and slaughter of civilians.

The defenders fought with a courage that forced tribute even from their enemies. "Obstinate and honorable" was how an English officer described them in the battle for Guangzhou. "Noble, nothing could have surpassed it," wrote another of their behavior before Dinghai. A Chinese commander at Jinjiang on the Yangtze, after all his men had been killed, "marched up to the points of the (British) bayonets and succeeded in pulling over the ramparts with him two of the grenadiers," perishing with the foe. When that city fell, its governor, Hai Ling, "retired to his house and deliberately burned himself to death on a pile of wood and official papers." In many places officers and men, refusing to surrender but unable to fight on with bows and matchlocks against the weapons produced by Britain's industries, committed suicide after first destroying their own families. Altogether, the British forces suffered about 500 killed; the Manchu-Chinese army lost 20,000.

Brightly heralding the future was the fact that the only victorious battle against the invaders was fought not by the feudal army but by the peasants. In May and June 1841, after Guangzhou city had been surrendered by the dynastic officials, the villagers of the neighboring Sanyuanli district beat back a British foray into the countryside. Then, led by the market-gardener Wei Shaohuang, they built up a popular resistance militia embracing over a hundred villages — the Ping Ying Tuan (Quell-the-British Corps). This force defeated 2,000 British troops, more than the aggressors had required to reduce Guangzhou itself. It locked them in a tight siege that was lifted only by the intervention of capitulationist officials.

At Sanyuanli the Chinese people first showed that while the rotting feudal government could not be relied on to defend the country, the rural masses, even with inferior arms, could fight on their home ground to defeat invaders equipped with the most modern weapons of the day.

The corrupt feudal government of China, however, could not and did not

want to build on the people's latent strength. Incapable and wavering, it quickly capitulated.

In 1840, when the British fleet sailed to a point on the seacoast only 90 miles away from Beijing, the emperor's court took fright. It began to negotiate with the invaders — at the same time removing and banishing the patriotic Lin Zexu, because his destruction of opium had “brought on the war.” Later, it reversed its policy once more and arrested the corrupt Manchu official Qishan (called Kishen in western literature) who had negotiated with the British.

It is indicative of the way the feudal mandarins robbed the people that Qishan's fortune, when confiscated by the Treasury, was found to include some 11,000 ounces of gold, 17 million ounces of silver, many cases of precious jewels and about 427,000 acres of farmland. In the same period the average plot tilled by a tenant or small owner-cultivator was less than two acres. And Qishan was by no means the richest of the dynasty's bureaucrats.

The result of the war was the imposition on China of the first of the humiliating “unequal treaties” which were to lead her to the brink of national extinction. The Treaty of Nanjing (1842) and its supplementary protocols (1843) provided for:

An indemnity for the opium seized and destroyed by Lin Zexu, thus giving all further traffickers in the poison an assurance of safety;

The surrender of Hongkong to the British who for many decades used it as a base for military, political and economic penetration of China; a model followed by the other foreign “great powers”, through the “concessions” and other privileges which they seized for themselves. (British rule in Hongkong ended only in 1997; 156 years afterwards.)

The opening of five major ports to British trade and settlement, which soon led to establishment of territorial enclaves under the British flag, the embryo of the so-called “concessions,” in China's port cities;

Exemption of British nationals from Chinese law thus permitting the extraterritorial operation of foreign law on China's soil;

The principle of “most favored nation” treatment which was claimed

by other powers and thus gave all foreigners the “privileges” extorted by the British;

This “legal” framework was to last for a century. Under it China herself was the most unfavored nation;

An undertaking by China not to charge more than 5 per cent import duty on foreign goods. This sabotaged, in advance, the development of her own home industry.

Seeing China’s weakness, after the opium war, the envoys of other foreign powers sailed in on their naval vessels to impose similar treaties. The first was Caleb Cushing of the United States, who blusteringly informed the Beijing court, reeling after their defeat at British hands, that refusal to negotiate would be regarded as “an act of national insult and a just cause for war.” Cushing managed to extort the Treaty of Wangxia (1844) by which, in addition to the privileges granted to the British, the feudal rulers of China conceded more far-going extraterritorial rights, a reduction of tonnage duties, and the right of internal navigation within Chinese waters. “This treaty,” boasted the American historian Tyler Dennett,* was “so superior that it became immediately the model for the French treaty.” Under the “most favored nation clause,” the British too enjoyed its additional benefits.

Soon afterwards, Britain attempted a “treaty” encroachment into China by land — in Tibet — as well as by sea from the coast. In 1847 she put on pressure for the official fixing of a border between her Indian domains and western Tibet, intending to impose a line of her own choosing. The demand was presented through Qiying (Kiyang), the Manchu viceroy at Guangzhou, where Britain could apply the naval power which was her chief advantage over China. But the warships could not sail to the heart of Asia, where she coveted Chinese territory, so the viceroy evaded the demand which he de-

* Dennett, Tyler, *Americans in Eastern Asia*, New York, 1922, p. 160. This author is so enthusiastic about the treaty that he forgets all editorial restraint and entitles two successive sections of his book “Superior Advantages of the Cushing Treaty.” He lauds its negotiator as “clever,” and extols his “profound and brilliant legal mind.” One of the superior points he lists is that “the Cushing Treaty was, in practice, the smugglers’ delight....”

scribed to the emperor as “highly suspect.” This attempt to nibble at China’s south-western borderlands was the precursor of many later British and other inroads. As will be seen subsequently, every foreign attempt to penetrate and alienate Tibet was part and parcel of the process of the imperialist invasion and attempted partition of China as a whole.

A further point may be noted in connection with the Opium War. This was the role which some missionaries, with their knowledge of China and her language, played in the humiliation of the country to which they had come ostensibly with no other object than to preach Christianity.

One of them, Dr. Gutzlaff, acted as a go-between for the British opium firm of Jardine’s, and received a subsidy for his religious magazine as a reward. Though a German not an Englishman, he became interpreter and organizer of intelligence for the British forces during the fighting. His specialty was the enlistment and use of Chinese spies (as early as 1832 he had hired traitors to make maps of the country’s coastal defenses in preparation for the attack that came eight years afterwards). When the invaders seized the town of Dinghai in the Zhoushan islands off the coast of Zhejiang, and later when they occupied the big port of Ningbo in that province, Gutzlaff was appointed chief occupation administrator in these places and used brutal floggings as a favored method of rule. He went on to serve as interpreter in the negotiations for the Nanjing Treaty, and finally as “Secretary for Chinese Affairs” in the British government of Hongkong.*

In the American Treaty of Wangxia, it was the American missionaries Williams, Bridgman and Parker (later American Minister to China) who advised the U.S. diplomat Cushing to take the stand that China must “bend or break”** — and conveyed his menaces, in Chinese to the officials with whom he dealt.***

* See Arthur Waley, *The Opium War Through Chinese Eyes*, London, 1958. The whole of Part V (pp.222-244), entitled “Gutzlaff and His Traitors” and based on contemporary documentation both British and Chinese, is devoted to the activities of this monumental scoundrel and hypocrite.

** Dennett, *op. cit.*, p. 146, quoting *Chinese Repository*, May 1840, p.2.

*** Just as Peter Parker, the first American Minister to China, was an ex-missionary, so was John Leighton Stuart, also an interventionist who was the last American Ambassador to the Kuomintang before the liberation.

Sophistry and hypocrisy, invariably the handmaidens of colonial policy, also characterized the pronouncements of the governments which invaded China at that time. During the war, the British assured all and sundry that the fighting was not about opium at all, but to teach the Chinese not to oppose progress and free trade. At its end the Chinese negotiators at Nanjing asked the British envoy, Sir Henry Pottinger, according to his own report, "why we (the British) would not act fairly toward them by prohibiting the growth of the poppy in our dominions, and thus effectively stop a traffic so pernicious to the human race." Pottinger replied that, filthy though he admitted the trade to be, the British government could not stop it — because that would be "inconsistent with our constitutional system"!

Such were the spiritual blessings of capitalist "free institutions" — to western economic and political aggressors on the one hand and to their Asian victims on the other. The material blessings followed the same pattern. By 1850, profits from the opium trade, which enfeebled and impoverished China, accounted for fully 20 per cent of the revenue of the British government of India.

Lest the reader think that we have given the Opium War, which after all happened a long time ago, too close attention, it is necessary to say how far forward its consequences went into time:

"Legal" import of opium into China continued until 1917, i.e. for 76 years. The limit of 5 per cent on import tariffs for all foreign goods was not abolished until 1928, 87 years after it was imposed.

Extraterritoriality for foreign nationals in China lasted *de jure* until 1942. In practice, Chinese law was never applied to foreigners until the liberation in 1949. The respective durations were 102 and 108 years.

The alien administrative concession on Chinese soil served as springboards for further expansion and aggression.

The privileges granted to foreign merchandise exempting it from secondary taxation after transport in land gave a kind of "protected" status to Chinese merchants acting as agents for European and American firms

anywhere in the country. Such merchants and agents were among the first representatives of the “compradore class” that was to play such an important part in subjecting China’s economy to imperialism.

In fact compradorism, both economic and political, was the embryo of semi-colonialism, a form of control so much in vogue — with respect to so many countries especially in Asia, Africa and Latin America — in much later times.

These are some reasons why knowledge of the Opium War is still necessary to the understanding of events in our own day.

In fact the last of its administrative and territorial effects was not cleared away till 1997 with the retrocession of Hongkong to China. This triumph came 156 years after the seizure of Hongkong. It took a decisive nationwide revolution and almost half a century of post-revolutionary national self-strengthening to achieve.

III

THE TAIPING REVOLUTION

(1850-1865)

The Opium War and the Treaties of Nanjing and Wangxia began both the century of the subjugation of China and the century of the struggles of the Chinese people to regain their independence. From then on, the Chinese people, to save their birthright, had to fight and defeat two enemies, not only the foreign invaders but also the feudal rulers who were neither willing nor able to defend the country.

Socially and economically, the most significant provision of these treaties was the 5 per cent maximum import tariff. Imposed at the instance of British millowners, this showed vividly that the supremacy of the manufacturer over the merchant, the new feature of European society, had also become the dominant factor in colonial expansion in Asia. The chartered monopoly of the mercantile East India Company in the China trade had been ended by Britain's Parliament, at the instance of British industrialists, in 1834. On the Chinese side, defeat in the Opium War put an end to the monopoly of the emperor's chartered merchants in Guangzhou, who alone had been authorized to deal with the foreigners. Their place was taken by the compradores, who owed their status not to Chinese imperial charter but to their selection by foreign capitalism as its chosen servants and instruments.

After the war, the opium trade kept on growing. In 1850 it reached 52,000 chests. In 1853 it was up to 80,000. But the import of British and American

cotton goods grew even faster. From an exporter of textiles, China was changed into a buyer. Exploitation by European industrial capital was added to exploitation by European mercantile capital. It proved an even greater shock to China's economy.

With the indemnity China had to pay to England, the outflow of silver increased still more. A high Chinese official, reporting to the emperor on the result, wrote in 1852:

In former days a *liang* (Chinese ounce) of silver was worth 1,000 cash (copper coins).... Nowadays one *liang* of silver is worth 2,000 cash. In former days to sell three *tou* (40 lb.) of rice could pay the land tax for one *mou* (1/6 acre) of land and have something left over. Nowadays to sell six *tou* is still not enough to pay the tax. The court naturally collects the regular amount but the small people actually have to pay double. Those who have no power to pay are innumerable.... Soldiers and government servants are sent out pursuing and compelling them day and night, whipping them all over the houses so their blood and flesh are scattered in disorder....*

Millions of weavers and other handicraftsmen were ruined — not only through direct competition in the market but also by the drying up of their sources of operating funds. Merchants and money-lenders, who used to finance the artisans, began to put their money into foreign goods.

The enforced opening of new ports to foreigners superseded the old inland transport system which used to carry all goods for foreign trade to Guangzhou, when it was the only open port. Thousands of boatmen and porters in South China could no longer find work.

Foreign exploitation quickly reached its logical climax in the hunting of human beings for sale. In the "coolie trade" which began in the 1840's, hundreds of thousands of Chinese were carried off, largely in British and Ameri-

* Memorial from Zeng Guofan to the emperor, February 7, 1852 (cited by Ssu-yu Teng, *New Light on the History of the Taiping Rebellion*, Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 44-45.

can vessels, to slavery in distant parts of the world. Mortality sometimes ran to over one-third on voyages made under what the American author H. F. McNair called "terrible conditions... as bad as those on the old African slave ships."* The collecting agents received 7 to 8 dollars for each man they managed to force or decoy into a "contract" for eight years' work. The survivors, on arrival, were sold for "from 400 to 1,000 dollars for each laborer." They toiled for western capitalist profit in the sugar plantations of Cuba, Demerara (British Guiana) and Hawaii, the mines of Malaya, Chile and Peru and on heavy manual jobs of all kinds on the Pacific Coast of the U.S.A. Many as reported by a later mission of Chinese imperial officials to Spanish-ruled Havana, "were killed by blows, died from the effect of wounds, hanged themselves... and threw themselves into wells and sugar cauldrons." But often, also, they rose and fought heroically against their oppressors both at sea and at their destination.** The firm solidarity of today's Chinese with the working people of Africa and Latin America, and with the Black people of the U. S. A., is strengthened by the fact that their forebears, too, knew the slave ship, the plantation and the racist's lash.

As a result of all the processes which western aggression had set afoot, China's feudal society fell into deep crisis. Increased outbreaks against the dynasty coincided with continued patriotic battles of the people against their oppressors. As we have already seen, after the Opium War the peasants around Guangzhou went on fighting the British, despite the government's capitulation, and were much more successful than the imperial army had been. And at other southern ports, though local authorities were supine, public indignation against the kidnapping of coolie-slaves was such that "a general uprising against foreigners was threatened."*** A saying arose, "The people fear the officials, the officials fear the foreign devils, and the foreign devils fear the people."

Obviously, in this situation, the people would not fear the officials much longer.

* McNair, H.F., *The Chinese Abroad*, Shanghai, 1924, pp.209-215.

** Seward, George F., in *Chinese Immigration in Its Social & Economical Aspects*, New York, 1881, gives facts on a number of heroic revolts.

*** Dennett, *op. cit.*, p.536.

Only seven years after the humiliating Treaty of Nanjing, China was engulfed by the tremendous Taiping Uprising, which was at the same time the last of her old-style peasant wars and the first great democratic fight of her people in the modern period. This revolutionary movement began in the province of Guangxi, near the Vietnam border, drawing its recruits not only from the exploited and insulted masses of the Hans, the majority of China's people but also from the national minorities who writhed under barbarous discrimination at the hands of the feudal rulers. Gathering force rapidly, it cut across the huge country like a sword of flame, approaching Beijing in the north, Shanghai in the east and the Tibetan mountains in the west.

Showing more maturity than any of the earlier revolts it resulted in the setting up of a plebeian revolutionary state, the Taiping Tianguo ("Heavenly Kingdom of the Great Peace"). The kingdom lasted for fifteen years (1850-65) and established its capital at Nanjing, the very city where the Manchus had begun to sign away the country to the British.

The Taipings had an organized and disciplined military system. They passed land laws which struck at the very basis of feudalism. They challenged the basic ideas of the feudal Confucian culture. They developed a truly national foreign policy in the face of external intervention.

Hong Xiuquan, the inspirer and supreme leader of the uprising, was a poverty-stricken schoolteacher who had been ill-treated by the corrupt Confucian scholar-bureaucracy that served the Manchus. A native of Guangdong, the province of which Guangzhou is the capital, he had been deeply influenced by the oppression suffered by the people, and enthused by the effective battle of the Cantonese peasant detachments against the British invaders. At the same time, he came into contact with the Christianity preached, but rarely practiced, by the missionaries. Calling himself the "younger brother of Jesus," he opposed Confucianism with a religio-social doctrine in the tradition of the Christ who "drove the money changers out of the temple." In this he was akin to such leaders of European anti-feudal struggles, centuries earlier, as John Ball in England, Thomas Munzer in Germany, and Jan Hus in what later became Czechoslovakia.

Hong's earliest colleagues in the leadership reflected the class basis of the movement. One was the landless charcoal-burner Yang Xiuqing, later to become the extremely able premier of the Taiping state and commander-in-chief of its forces. A second was the land-poor peasant and wood-cutter, Xiao Chaogui and a third, the village teacher, Feng Yunshan. There were also representatives of a small section of relatively well-to-do scholar gentry who were opposed to the dynasty for national, not social reasons. These did not prove stable. Wei Changhui, a self-seeking landlord and pawnbroker played a vile part in sharpening the internecine conflicts which began to rend the movement when its overall victory seemed within view. Shi Dakai — an able commander — sought to avoid the growing dissensions by leading his troops to extend Taiping territories to western China. But their separation weakened the whole cause and led to their own geographical and tactical entrapment in the mountains of Sichuan province — with capture as the only alternative to annihilation. Deceived by promises of no reprisals against himself or his men, Shi Dakai agreed to captivity. The result was not safety but slaughter. He himself was publicly put to death by the slowest and cruellest method China's feudal law could devise — the paring away of his flesh slice by slice while he still lived.

(Shi Dakai's army was trapped and defeated on the banks of the mountain-girt Dadu River. In the same place, seven decades later in 1935 — the Chinese Red Army led by Mao Zedong, Zhu De and other accomplished commanders was to face the same natural and military obstacles — in a crucial episode of its famous Long March. Amid sneering predictions by Chiang Kai-shek that it must now end like Shi Dakai — the Red Army — which had also studied that history proved that it could achieve an entirely opposite result. Much more mature than the Taipings as a political and military force — in the morale and skill of its fighters and reliance on the help of the local people — it successfully did the "impossible". With a dauntless vanguard braving enemy machine-guns at close range it secured a single ancient, slim and swaying suspension bridge which the enemy had set on fire. Over it the main Red Army crossed the turbulent waters. This feat was the key to the victory of the Long

March and later of the whole Chinese Revolution — a fitting avenging of the Taipings by the nationwide triumph of the cause of which they were forerunners.)

In its beginning, the Taiping movement was almost contemporary, with the democratic storm that shook Europe in the year 1848. This did not pass unnoticed at the time. The Bible-and-opium missionary Gutzlaff, a Christian of a very different kind from Hong Xiuquan, returned from China to Germany in 1849. Alarmed by what he found, he cried out that the socialist ideas of the European working class, then appearing for the first time as an independent political force, seemed much like those propagated “by many among the mob in China.”

This drew keenly penetrating comment from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Written during the opening period of the aggression of western capitalism against China, it was the first manifestation of that solid friendship of the most advanced working-class elements in Europe and the rising peoples of the oppressed and “sleeping” East that was to develop, in our own time, into the central force of socialism as a factor on a world scale. Marx wrote in the *Neue Rheinische Revue* of January 31, 1850:

The socialism of China may have the same relationship to that of Europe as that of Chinese philosophy to the Hegelian. It is nonetheless to be rejoiced at that the most ancient and stable empire in the world, acted upon by cotton goods of the English bourgeois, is on the eve of a social upset which, in any case, must have extremely important results for civilization. When our European reactionaries, in their flight to Asia that awaits them in the near future, come at length to the Great Wall of China, to the gates which lead to the strong hold of arch-conservatism, who knows if they will not find there the inscription:

**“REPUBLIQUE CHINOISE, LIBERTÉ,
EGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ.”**

The amazing military successes of the Taipings were due to the fact that they won the devotion of the people, and released their energy and talents.

This was a result of their social and political program, which expressed all the accumulated popular grievances — and particularly those of the peasantry. Everywhere the Taiping forces appeared, they destroyed the authority of the hated Qing dynasty, deposing its officials and distributing their wealth among the poor.

In place of the concentration of landownership in the hands of feudal landlords, they proclaimed their equalitarian “Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom,” an Agrarian Law that decreed “All the land under heaven should be cultivated by all the people under heaven....”*

To the hungry and naked, they brought a government which stated its determination that “there should be no person who is not well fed and well clad.”

In place of the thieving and parasitic troops of the dynasty, they created a people’s army that worked as well as fought; punished opium smoking, gambling and corruption and maintained revolutionary order.

In a feudal society where women had had no rights they stipulated that women should have land distributed to them on an equal basis with men, and be accepted into the revolutionary armed forces. Prostitution, foot-binding and the purchase and sale of women in marriage were prohibited.

An American missionary observer noted that, by contrast to the ruling feudal dynasty which was interested only in western arms, the Taipings absorbed those European ideas which were of service to the people. Public posters on the walls of Taiping villages which he visited contained notices “to repair to certain quarter for vaccination against smallpox.”

A dynastic general who was engaged in trying to suppress the Taipings reported apprehensively to his superiors: “Unanimity of mind, familiarity with geographical conditions and greatness of courage are the enemy’s strong points and our weak points” — the complaint, in every age, of all who try to fight against the people. A British diplomat wrote, after passing through Taiping territory, that it had “become a good conclusion that in the tracts of country

* These and immediately subsequent quotations are from Augustus Lindley (“Lin-Le”), *TI-PING TIEN KWOH, the History of the Ti-Ping Revolution*, London, 1866.

occupied by the Taipings there must be greater security of life and property than in those occupied by the Ta-tsings (the Qing dynasty-Ed.).”*

The Taipings recognized none of the special privileges which the foreign powers had extracted from the Qing dynasty, but they were willing, and indeed anxious, to develop equal foreign trade and relations. The contemporary British author Augustus Lindley, who ardently defended their cause, cited the following statistics from China trade reports to show how both production and commerce increased under their rule. In 1849-50, the last two years before the rising, China exported 53,960,000 lb. of tea and 16,134 bales of raw silk. In 1862-63, when all the main silk districts and most of the tea districts were in Taiping hands, the export of tea had more than doubled, reaching 118,692,138 lb., while that of raw silk had grown five-fold, to 83,264 bales.

Despite their peasant ideal of an equalitarian utopia, the reforms of the Taipings were actually of such a character as to pave the way to capitalism.

In 1856, the third year after the Taipings has set up their capital at Nanjing, the landlord-traitor Wei Changhui massacred the peasant leader Yang Xiuqing and his followers. Wei was in turn executed by Hong Xiuquan, but political stagnation and retrogression did not stop. Although the Taiping state and army existed for another nine years, and the urban and rural poor continued their devoted support, the movement had come to a historical blind alley.

Militarily, the feudal government was given a breathing spell by the strategic error of the Taipings in failing to press on to Beijing and to cooperate with other revolts in North and South China. It took advantage of the respite to enlist large sections of the Han landed gentry, originally hostile to the Manchu dynasty on grounds of nationality, who had decided that to save their land rents they must also save the dynasty. In the final years, too, the weight of foreign intervention was thrown against the rising.

The policies of the British and the United States governments toward the Taipings were a study in perfidy. Because the leopard does not change his spots, the way these policies developed will be readily understood by all

* Despatch from Henry Meadows, British Consul at Shanghai, to Lord John Russell, British Foreign Secretary, dated February 19, 1861, quoted by Lindley, *op. cit.*, p.462.

those, in Europe and Asia, who witnessed the manoeuvres of the capitalist foreign governments in relation to the resistance and national liberation movements in and after World War II. Like semi-colonialism, the attempt to subordinate such movements to great-power ends is a constant characteristic of imperialism — including Soviet hegemonism which emerged in the 1960's as its most recent variant; hence the importance of their vigilant adherence to the principle of national independence.

In its early period, the Taiping rising received much praise in the western press, and even ruling circles, as being Christian and opposing the corruption and backwardness of the Qing court and its officials. Neutrality in the Chinese civil war was piously proclaimed. The belligerent status of the Taiping state was recognized. Its capital was frequently visited by missionaries and diplomats. However, as it turned out, the foreign powers were only looking for ways of turning the rising to their own profit.

Some diplomatic gamblers dreamed of transforming the Taiping leaders into their tools, then helping them to victory and thus gaining control of China. Others simply wanted to see China, exhausted by civil war, ceasing to exist as a unified state and offering endless opportunities of domination through disruption. *The North American Review*, for example, wrote of Hong Xiuquan, the Taiping leader, in July 1854:

Unwittingly to himself perhaps, he will teach us where to introduce the wedge, where to rest the lever; and it will not be many years ere we find European influence, hitherto so powerless in the high exclusive walls of the palace of Beijing, operating with wonderful force at the courts of a score of kingdoms, petty in comparison with the great aggregate of which they once formed a part. *

But the Taipings showed no disposition to be so used. They showed that they regarded China's affairs as her own business by refusing a foreign offer to "mediate" a cease fire with the Qing dynasty, and by committing the unpar-

* Dennett, Tyler, *Americans in Eastern Asia*, New York, 1922, p.212

donable "crime" of really suppressing the opium trade in their areas. Moreover, after the Wei Changhui coup had revealed the internal contradictions in the Taiping state, the foreign powers no longer looked at the dynasty as too decayed to save. Despite its weakness and corruption, they picked it as their instrument: indeed, the weaker and more corrupt it was the better, because this would make their domination all the more certain.

As early as 1853, when the Taipings were nearing Shanghai for the first time and the imperial officials were fleeing, the British, American and French Consuls had seized control of the Chinese Customs there. As the civil war continued, the dynasty also turned over duty-collection at other ports to the foreigners. This concession made the western powers, already enjoying the 5 per cent maximum tariff, into China's door-keepers, and controllers of one of a major source of her government revenue. Here indeed, they decided, was something to defend from the Taipings, who did not take such a light view of their country's sovereignty and would certainly have revoked these privileges the minute they got power.

In 1856, steps were taken to turn the feudal government into a completely pliant tool, by cowing it not only into concessions but into utter subservience. Britain, later joined by France, declared war on China. The purpose was to expand foreign gains in the Opium War treaties of 1842-43 (which were subject to revision after twelve years). The flimsy pretext was the seizure by Chinese authorities of a Chinese opium junk flying the British flag.

The Second Opium War was thus launched. But the British, in waging it, encountered a serious snag. Their plans had called for it to be fought, to an even greater extent than the first had been, with Indian colonial troops. But just at that time, the Indian army, England's carefully groomed new tool for world-wide empire,* revolted against its imperialist masters in the great Na-

* Giving vent to this philosophy, Charles Napier, British Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, had written not long before the National Rising: "Would that I were King of India! I would make Moscow and Peking shake.... Were I King of England, I would, from the palace of Delhi, thrust forth a clenched fist.... England's fleet should be all in the West, and the Indian Army all in the East." Quoted from R. Palme Dutt, *India Today*, Bombay, 1949.

tional Rising of 1857. This delayed the operations against China. It was an early example of how the Asian peoples, by their anti-colonial wars in the modern period, have helped one another. After the "Indian Mutiny" had been suppressed, however, the British were able to send to China large numbers of troops armed with weapons accumulated in the course of the just-concluded Crimean War in Europe and backed by a navy that had been converted to steam. They were also able to charge the entire cost of their aggression in China, and in Afghanistan and Persia in the same period, to the public debt of subjugated India. Such was the way in which the defeat of one Asian nation hurt many. It was a further lesson in the inevitable bitter harvest when any colonialized nation or area is forced into the role of base or recruiting ground for imperialism's aim of enslaving others.

In 1857-58, Guangzhou was bombarded. Anglo-French forces also landed at Tianjin, only 80 miles from Beijing.

Once again the dynasty gave way. By the Treaties of Tianjin (1858) it conceded:

- A tremendous war indemnity;**
- The right of foreigners to reside in Beijing;**
- Express legalization of both opium and missionary activity;**
- The opening of several new ports to settlements under foreign administration; and Perpetuation of foreign control of the Customs and tariff.**

The weak and treacherous dynasty likewise agreed to help the export of Chinese contract-labor, thus legalizing the infamous "coolie trade." Article V of the 1858 treaty with Britain read in part:

... the Emperor of China will, by decree, command the high authorities of every province to proclaim... that Chinese, choosing to take service in the British Colonies, or other parts beyond the sea, are at perfect liberty to enter into engagements with British subjects for that purpose....

The “prefect liberty,” in practice, was for the traffickers in slave labor, whose depredations were thus legitimized. The people did not want it. The very next year, Rutherford Alcock, the British Consul in Guangzhou, was reporting the frequent killing of coolie-traders. For things to go on as they were, he declared, was “no longer possible or safe.” This was because:

...when no man could leave his own house, even in public thoroughfares and in open day, without a danger of being hustled, under false pretences of debt or delinquency, and carried off... to be sold to the purveyors of coolies at so much a head, and carried off to sea, never again to be heard of, the whole population of the city and the adjoining districts were aroused to a sense of common peril.*

The imperialist remedy, however, was not to stop the trade but to try to lull public feeling. A supervised “Emigration House” was opened and Harry Parkes, another British official, wrote of it, underlining what he thought most important — a greater profit:

I am in hopes that the system will prove so much cheaper than that of man-stealing that those foreigners who do not adopt it from motives of morality will do so with a view to economy.**

The United States, besides claiming all the rights extended to Britain by the 1858 Treaty, negotiated some special supplementary clauses. These were almost angelic in their wording. They authorized the transport abroad of “coolies” on the basis of “the inherent and inalienable right of man to change his home and allegiance”!*** By the 1860’s, Chinese contract-slaves comprised

* Quoted in McNair, H.F., *Modern Chinese History — Selected Readings*, Shanghai, 1927, pp.409-411.

** *Ibid.*

*** Many U.S. authors have tried to make out that the Chinese laborers who went to the United States were “free” and not part of the “coolie trade.” This was not so. Dennett, in his *Americans in Eastern Asia*, while stating some differences with the practices elsewhere, says dryly that one should “not reach the further conclusion that they were free.”

nine-tenths of the workers building railways in the Pacific Coast states of the U. S.A. Later they were driven, by discrimination, persecution and frequent lynchings,* into the marginal laundry and restaurant trades — virtually the only ones open to them for decades. No longer needed once the hardest physical work of opening up the West was done, Chinese immigrants were totally barred from the country in 1882. So much for “the inherent and inalienable right of man to change his home.” And as for changing “allegiance,” in that same year even Chinese already in the United States were made ineligible for citizenship on racial grounds (in fact they had been denied naturalization since they first came to California in 1849).

Czarist Russia, which had not fought in the Second Opium War, and the United States, which had not declared war but had taken part in the hostilities against China, secured the benefits of the concessions ground out of her through the “most favored nation clause.” Their envoys were with the Anglo-French fleet off the North China coast and joined in the pressure on China to accept the aggressors’ demands. In fact, among the four Treaties of Tianjin forced on China in 1858, those with these “neutrals” preceded those with her enemies in the war; the Russian treaty was signed on June 13, the U.S. treaty on June 18, and those with Britain and France on June 26 and 27 respectively. In addition, during the hostilities, Czarist Russia took advantage of China’s plight to impose the separate Treaty of Aihui (May 28, 1858) in which she secured the cession of territory in eastern Siberia north of the Heilongjiang (Amur) river. This was the biggest booty of all — 600,000 square kilometers of land rich in every resource, which, as Engels wrote at the time, was “as large as France and Germany put together” and included “a river as large as the Danube.”

In 1860, because the Chinese imperial court had delayed ratification of the treaties in fear of popular wrath, Britain and France resumed the war. Despite a stronger defense, the Dagou forts, which guarded the sea approach

* “In 1855, for example 32 Chinese were murdered in California,” says a standard U. S. work, “... in 1862 this number was increased to 88.” Treat, P. J., *The Far East, A Political and Diplomatic History*, New York, 1928, p. 510.

to Beijing, were captured and razed to the ground. The Anglo-French forces then stormed into the capital itself, looting and destroying the Yuan Ming Yuan Summer Palace, one of the great treasure-houses of world art, and committing many outrages against the population. The “saintly” Charles George Gordon (then a subaltern in the British contingent) wrote home of his own share in this act of brigandage and vandalism:

We went out and, after pillaging it, burnt the whole place... we got upward of £48 apiece prize money before we went out of here; and although I have not as much as many, I have done well.... you can scarcely conceive of the beauty and magnificence of the places we burnt... we were so pressed for time that we could not plunder them carefully.... Everybody was wild for plunder.*

The famous French democrat, poet and novelist, Victor Hugo, protested in an angry parable:

All the treasures of our cathedrals could not equal this fabulous and magnificent oriental museum.... One day two bandits entered the Summer Palace. One pillaged and the other set fire.... One filled his pockets and the other filled his coffers, and they left arm in arm, laughing. When this goes down in history, one of the bandits will be called France and the other Britain.

To this acid description, penned in 1861, Hugo added the comment:

But I protest... governments are sometimes bandits, the people never... I hope the day will come when France, purged and liberated, will return this plunder to China.**

* Boulger Demetrius, *Life of Gordon*, London, 1896, p.46.

** Quoted by Jean Chesneaux, “French Friends of China, Old and New,” *China Reconstructs*, July 1958 where he referred also to a set of engravings in which the famous artist, Honoré Daumier, “denounced the brutality of... the French expeditionary force and the scandal of a war waged to force a people to consume a poison (opium — I.E.).”

A century and more later they are still in the museums and mansions of the West or are hawked to the super-rich in “prestigious” auction rooms as investments or evidence of cultivated taste — never mind if the goods were stolen.

As a front for their further aggressions, the ratifications of the 1858 pacts, plus new ones imposing further penalties, were dictated by the British and French in Beijing itself in 1860. And Czarist Russia, though a non-belligerent, made another huge haul, purely by blackmail. Her emissary Count Ignatiev, having gained prior knowledge of the intention of the western invaders to evacuate, promised the spineless Qing court that he would get them to leave by diplomatic pressure. In return, he secured the cession of an additional 400,000 square kilometers of Chinese territory including what became Czarist Russia’s Maritime Province, where she turned the Chinese town of Haishenwei into the city and fortress of Vladivostok (meaning “Rule the East”). Thus Russia, by the two treaties she pressed the Qing court into signing in 1858 and 1860, seized a million square kilometers of Chinese lands (the total of her acquisitions from China, including those along the western frontiers at various times, was about 1.5 million square kilometers).^{*} Like the other powers, Russia both threatened the effete ruling dynasty into surrenders and upheld it against revolution. She alternated inducement — the promise to supply

^{*} Contrary to the allegations spread by the later leaders of the Soviet Union among its own people and abroad after 1969 when they themselves resorted to armed crossings to provoke a border crisis, China is not claiming the restitution of the huge territories lost to Czarist Russia under 19th century unequal treaties. Her principles for solving border problems, as outlined in the Chinese Government Declaration of October 7, 1969, include the following points:

To distinguish right from wrong in history, confirm that the treaties relating to the present boundary were unequal, imposed on China by Czarism. (They had been frankly branded as such by the Soviet government and by Soviet publications before the hegemonists took over and went all-out to glorify Czarist expansionism.)

In view of the actual situation, these treaties could be taken as the basis for overall settlement of boundary questions through peaceful talks.... China did not demand the return of Chinese territories annexed through these treaties.

Conclusion of a new and equal border treaty.

As regards disputed areas (occupied by Russia beyond any treaty line), China advocated maintaining the status quo, averting armed conflict and disengaging the armed forces of the two sides pending a negotiated settlement.

cannon for use against the Taipings, with menace — that she would join the British and French in war unless her territorial demands were met.

The new unequal treaties forced down the throat of the dynastic court were too valuable an asset for the foreign powers to give up. The advantages they conferred appeared far greater than the purely commercial ones of a growing trade on equal terms, which would have been the prospect if the Taipings won. Moreover, the feudal rulers had not betrayed the country for nothing. In Article 10 of their treaty with Britain, they had inserted the reservation that the concession allowing British ships to navigate the Yangtze would become operative only when “peace was restored” in Taiping territory. The treaty with France promised to open Nanjing to foreigners — as soon as it should be recaptured from the Taipings. The same trick was played with the opium trade. It was now legalized by a treaty, which made the Taipings into “international lawbreakers” — because they banned opium.

For these reasons, the tone of the foreign governments and press changed sharply. The Taipings were no longer praised as reformers and co-religionists but denounced as “anarchists,” and as “blasphemers” for daring to profess their own type of Christianity. All sorts of atrocity stories were circulated, obligingly supplied by dynastic officials or simply invented by their foreign authors. The government of the emperor in Beijing, so recently attacked as reactionary, incorrigible and heathen, was now described as a stabilizing force, a guardian of trade and legality.

By 1861-62, British and French troops were participating in the hostilities against the Taipings in Shanghai. In addition, an international corps of freebooters, placed in command over Chinese, had been gathered by Frederick Townsend Ward, a U.S. adventurer fresh from William Walker’s piratical invasion of Nicaragua, to fight under the dynastic flag. Ward was killed, the Taipings thus avenging the Latin American people. His place was then taken by the British Major (afterwards General) Charles Gordon, the imperialist *beau ideal* whom we have already met in the role of looter of the Yuan Ming Yuan Summer Palace, and who perished many years later in battle against the homeland-defending patriots of Sudan, who thus avenged the wrongs of the Chinese

people as well as their own. Apart from Gordon, a number of other British military and naval officers were attached as advisers to Chinese imperial units. The newest British weapon, the Enfield rifle, never yet used in Europe, was supplied in quantity to equip these troops. Armored steam gunboats, also never employed in war before, were sent to ply the Yangtze.

What all this meant to the people was frankly admitted by *Overland Trade Report*, a British paper in China, on June 10, 1862:

Since the death of Admiral Protet the French troops have been behaving like fiends, killing indiscriminately men, women and children. Truth demands the confession that British sailors have likewise been guilty of the commission of similar revolting barbarities — not only on the Taipings but upon the inoffensive, helpless country people. It is a most singular circumstance, but no less strange than true, that the Taipings have never yet committed an act of retaliation upon any European who may have fallen into their hands.*

Traitors, as usual, did their foul work. After the Taipings lost Ningbo, wrote the Hongkong *China Mail*, May 22, 1862:

One of the principal murderers and torturers... was one Afook, the British Consul's boy or personal attendant... who was dressed up in silks and who, stuck upon a pony, paraded the city with attendants, ordering them to execute unfortunates, and issuing orders (which were actually obeyed) to the English soldiers.**

To the honor of the western peoples, there was active protest in Europe against the imperialist intervention. Marx and Engels exposed and denounced it mercilessly. Working class and democratic groups in Britain demonstrated against it in Trafalgar Square in London. It was stigmatized by contemporary Russian and other visitors. A number of foreigners fought for the Taipings.

* Lindley, *op. cit.*, pp. 519-520. Italics mine — I.E.

** *Ibid.*, p.536

Although some, like the American Burgevine, were adventurers who crossed from side to side, others were actuated by honest motives and remained loyal to the end. Among them was Augustus Lindley, who wrote the valuable and stirring account of the rising we have already cited, some other Englishmen, several former non-commissioned officers of the French army and an Italian, the Sardinian Major Moreno, whom Lindley describes as selfless and honorable and who for a time served as an undercover Taiping agent in Shanghai. Several of these men, unlike the foreigners who served the feudal rulers, were volunteers who took no pay.

Particularly to be noted is the presence among the volunteers of a number of Indians. After the suppression of the great National Rising of 1857,* England had sent the 5th Bombay Infantry Regiment, the 22nd Punjab Infantry Regiment and other British-officered Indian units to the front against the Taipings. But almost immediately, some of their common soldiers began to go over to the revolutionary side. The imperial commander Li Hongzhang wrote that "50 or 60 dark-complexioned foreigners" were fighting in February 1863 with the peasant forces in Zhejiang province. In May of the same year, according to a British observer, three former members of the 5th Bombay Infantry were found among the Taiping dead after the battle of Taitsang, not far from Shanghai. Lindley, too, wrote of Indians in the Taiping ranks. So, even a hundred years ago, the policy of "making Asians fight Asians" awoke Asians to something quite different — a sense of common interest, and the need for cooperation against their foreign oppressors.**

* The Indian National Rising of 1857 broke out during the Second Opium War. While the connection between the two awaits fuller study, it was undoubtedly very close. A letter from General Sir Henry Havelock, then British commander in India to Lord Canning, Governor of Bengal, traced the cause of the discontent among Indian troops not to the often cited story of the violation of Hindu and Muslim dietary laws by the "use of greased cartridges" (this, in fact, had been discontinued earlier) but to the General Service Enlistments Order to raise men to fight China. Indian soldiers of the Bengal Army units affected were determined to reject such service; its 47th Regiment had earlier been mown down by the British for refusing to sail to Burma in similar circumstances.

** Most of these facts are from the article, "The National Liberation Movement in China and India a Century Ago," by the Chinese historians Yu Sheng-wu and Chang Chen-kun, printed in *People's Daily*, Beijing, in May 1957, in connection with the 100th anniversary of the Indian National Rising. Information on the Taitsang battle is from Andrew Wilson's *The Ever-Victorious Army*, Edinburgh, 1868.

The last phase of the struggle was the bloodiest, with the dynastic and interventionist forces devastating huge tracts of country. On the side of the Taipings in this phase there appeared a statesman and commander of stature, the poor peasant's son Li Xiucheng who did much to revivify the cause and, in the few days before his execution by the dynasty, wrote an important history and vindication of the movement. The Taipings fought heroically but at the same time the inherent limitations of the movement were reflected in political and strategic errors by the leadership. With all forces and classes in China in motion, increasingly screened by the foreigners, the feudal forces, too, threw up new representatives. These included the Chinese landlord generals Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang and Zuo Zongtang, the first of a long series of "strong men" (strong in dealing with the people but weak in relation to foreign oppressors) whose last lineal political descendant was Chiang Kai-shek. It is significant that these abettors of oppression — in many cases national traitors — became the darlings of generations of foreign historians, and reactionary Chinese scholars and politicians (Zeng Guofan, for example, was Chiang Kai-shek's hero). But as a Chinese historian has commented, quoting the words of the ancient Chinese philosopher Mencius (372-289 B. C.): "Although their offspring may try to glorify these ancestors, the bad name will stick to the family."

The Taiping revolutionary peasant war was the most bitter armed conflict of the entire nineteenth century, exceeding in fierceness, and in the number of people who perished, the Napoleonic, Crimean, American Civil and Franco-Prussian Wars. Though it had its weaknesses, and its final suppression was complete, it showed that the feudal dynasty was no longer able, by its own forces, to control the Chinese people.

On the reactionary side, the Chinese ruling class, which had been saved by the skin of its teeth, became the junior partner of the foreign invaders. (This unsavory combination governed China until 1949, was helped to ensconce itself on Taiwan, and until the opening of the 1970's stalked the halls of the United Nations where a Kuomintang leftover was supposed to "represent China.") From the people's side, the mighty Taiping struggle gave Chinese

feudalism a blow from which it would never recover. Thenceforth it only awaited its gravediggers. And the foreign imperialists, from the Taiping Revolution on, were very chary of direct confrontation with Chinese popular uprisings, preferring whenever possible to prop up the rickety screen of Chinese reactionary officials and armies between themselves and this potentially incalculable power.

A glorious tradition lived on. The stories of Taiping survivors inspired Sun Yat-sen, who was born in 1866, the year after the final suppression, with confidence in the strength of the people to overthrow their oppressors, domestic foreign or both together.

In the 1930's, the leaders of the Chinese Red Army, which fought over some of the same territory the Taipings passed through, had many of their experiences in mind. In the 1940's, the Taiping slogan, "Well fed; well clad," was used once more in the Liberated Areas led by the Communist Party, in the phenomenal production movement by means of which the army, people and government personnel of these areas, with "a hoe in one hand and rifle in the other," overcame the effects of the Kuomintang blockade and achieved self-support in the guerrilla war against Japan. And the self reliance of the New China stems, in its turn, from that precedent.

Today the heroic memory of the Taipings is honored beyond China as well. It is becoming known to the Asian, African and Latin American peoples as part of the common heritage of anti-imperialist struggles. It will certainly be remembered among all peoples as one of the world's great wars for national and social emancipation.

IV

FIRST FAILURE OF “WESTERNIZATION” (1865-1895)

The period between the defeat of the Taipings in 1865 and the overthrow of the feudal monarchy in 1911 had three characteristics. There was a temporary consolidation of the control of the Qing dynasty within the country. Creeping foreign encroachment brought China to the verge of partition. New classes appeared in Chinese society — the capitalists and the industrial workers.

In the same interval, the form of foreign exploitation of China changed once again. Before the Opium War, mercantile capital had been the chief instrument. After 1840 it was industrial capital. Toward the turn of the century — imperialists finance capital came to the fore.

In the new conditions, Chinese opposition to feudalism and foreign control also went through a number of unprecedented phases and forms. Through these the people learned much that would be of use to them in future struggles.

After defeating the Taipings, the Qing dynasty found itself in possession of relatively modernized military forces. They were equipped with western firearms and generalled by the new-type Chinese landlord officials who had arisen during the crisis. With these forces, anti-dynastic revolts in other parts of the country were crushed. The process took decades.

Let us examine some characteristics of these upheavals.

The Nian uprising, which ranged over Hebei, Shandong and Henan in northern China and overflowed into the adjacent provinces of the center and

west, began in 1853 and lasted fifteen years. It was an equalitarian peasant movement whose defense of the poor and blows at the dynasty and the rich won ardent popular support. Coordinating its earlier operations with those of the Taipings, towards the end it was joined by some of their remaining units. Militarily, it displayed high skill in guerrilla tactics — rapid movement, ambush, instant transitions from feigned retreat to fierce counter-attack, and lightning cavalry raids. Its weakness, on the other hand, lay in failure to establish bases and a governmental structure. At its height, with over 100,000 fighters in the field, it encircled and destroyed the army of one of the Qing dynasty's top commanders, the Mongol prince Sengkolintsin, who was killed in a cavalry encounter in 1865. The Qing dynasty, feeling threatened in its own capital of Beijing, threw in the full weight of its forces, again assisted by the British and French and commanded by the national traitor Li Hongzhang. In 1868, the Nians were crushed.

In 1827, a revolt of the Miao nationality in Guizhou province, which had also temporarily joined forces with one of the Taiping columns, was suppressed after operations lasting fully 18 years.

In 1873, Zuo Zongtang destroyed a rising of the Muslim Hui nationality in the northwestern provinces of Shaanxi and Gansu which had carried on some joint operations with the Nian movement. The same year saw the subjugation of a Muslim minority revolt led by Du Wenxiu (who called himself "Sultan Suleiman") in Yunnan province, in the southwestern corner of China, which had begun when the dynasty was busy fighting the Taipings.

This vast wave of revolts, embracing almost the whole country, showed that China's people of all nationalities could no longer stand the oppression and exploitation of feudal society in crisis, aggravated by imperialist incursion. Their frequent cooperation, though sporadic and marginal and therefore not yet decisive, also showed that the blazing hatred of national inequality among the minorities was directed at the rulers and officials, and not the laboring people, of the Han majority. In fact, though some of these risings were national in form, all were peasant movements in essence. And just as the armed peasants of several nationalities fought in harmony, so did the feudal ele-

ments connive — from the Manchu nobility of the Qing ruling house to the Han landlord-officials like Li Hongzhang, Zeng Guofan and Zuo Zongtang and the Mongol aristocrat Sengkolintsin. China's ruling dynasties, whether of Han or other national origins, always sowed dissension among her nationalities, favoring some and degrading others on the old principle of "divide and rule." But China's multi-national people, though influenced to a degree by such disruption, again and again found common ground against the common oppressors. Thus the unity of China, based on ancient economic and cultural interweaving even before the many centuries of common statehood, was an objective fact. The masses of no single nationality in China, big or small, could solve their problems without help from the others. This became even more true after imperialism entered the picture.

The campaigns to suppress by force the protest of China's people against an already moribund social and administrative system were accompanied by incredible bloodshed and suffering. Countless numbers of peasants and of the national minority people were slaughtered. In the Guizhou rising alone, a million of the Miao people lost their lives. Whole provinces in the Northwest and Southwest of the country were reduced to semi-desert, as parts of Central China had been in the campaign against the Taipings. The population of China fell considerably.

Added to this frightful price which China's poor and oppressed paid for continuing feudal rule was the further humbling of the country in external relations. The Qing court, which only a few years earlier had refused access to its capital to foreign diplomats, sent a diplomatic mission abroad in 1867, under the leadership of one of them — the American Anson Burlingame.

Foreign expeditionary forces and political agents began to operate on China's land borders as well as her seacoast.

The British, through Burma, tried to turn the Muslim rising in Yunnan to their own advantage (its leader was induced to send his son to Britain.)

Britain, drawing in Turkey to give a "pan-Islamic" coloration to her schemes (Turkey's Ottoman dynasty styled itself the Khalifate or religious leader of the Muslim world) supported the feudal-aristocratic revolt led by

Yakub Beg in the Kashgar region of southern Xinjiang in 1868-79. Yakub was a Tadjik noble, and not even a native of Xinjiang. The British wanted him to rip Kashgar away from China and make it a buffer state of their Indian Empire. T. Douglas Forsyth, an official under the British viceroy of India, had a great deal to do with the arming and foreign contacts of Yakub Beg, with whom he signed the "treaty" of 1874. Britain's plan of territorial encroachment had two phases. Yakub was to be compelled to cede outright certain places close to Kashmir. At the same time, a formal proposal was made to the Qing dynasty that another "boundary" be drawn between China and the Kashgar region. And when Yakub's regime was already tottering, Sir Thomas Wade, the British Minister in Beijing, made a proposal that "Yakub Beg could surrender, should China allow him to keep his kingdom under Chinese suzerainty."* Also envisioned was the partitioning of Xinjiang, the south to go to Britain and the north to Czarist Russia.

Though all these plots miscarried, Britain managed to establish and maintain a Consulate-General with an armed unit in Kashgar which was used for decades of further trouble-making.** A succession of border expeditions, including one in 1889 under Francis Younghusband, who was later to lead the invasion of Tibet in 1904, resulted in the assumption of British control over nearby strategic mountain states such as Gilgit and Hunza. Younghusband's biographer writes frankly that the purpose of his earlier intelligence mission was "the exploration of all the Himalayan passes from the north" (i. e. from within Chinese and other, but not Indian, territory). Younghusband himself later wrote down his advocacy for the British frontier service:

An opportunity should never be lost. A frontier agent should be as

* Some aspects of this story are related by Owen Lattimore in *Pivot of Asia: Sinkiang and the Inner Asian Frontiers of China and Russia*, Boston, 1950. Various sources, including British Foreign Office archives and Parliamentary Papers, are cited. This may have been the first use of the term suzerainty as a substitute for sovereignty preparatory to separating parts of China from the center and avoiding them into foreign (at that time British) spheres of control.

** Seaver, George, *Francis Younghusband*, London, 1952, pp. 129 and 260.

alert as a hawk to snatch it... failure to seize it may mean years of ponderous effort for Government.

The combined method which he described had two aspects. One was plain land-grabbing whenever possible. The other was sustained "ponderous effort," which meant patiently juggling the status of China's borderlands until sovereignty was watered down into "suzerainty" and the territories became "buffers" destined to come under full colonial control. This favorite device was pursued with especial persistence in relation to Tibet. Both there and in Xinjiang it left poison-fruits in the shape of border and other problems with India deep within tractional Chinese territory, in places which even the corrupt Qing dynasty had never relinquished.

Czarist Russia, in a counterpart to British intrigues in southern Xinjiang, pursued her own annexationist ambitions by sending troops into the Ili region of northern Xinjiang. In 1881, she withdrew from one part of this area, while another was ceded to her by the Qing government in the St. Petersburg Treaty of that year.

It is worthy of note that as between the Russian and British empires of the time, each was in the habit of justifying its own gnawing at China as a defensive measure against the other — and sometimes even as a "defense" of China against encroachment. Such tunes can still be found in British historical literature. They have had a revival, too, in Soviet historiography, particularly after the 1960's, bent on re-embellishing the expansionist policies of the Czars which the earlier, socialist Soviet historians had scrupulously and honestly unmasked. In fact neither the Russian nor the British empire-builders of those days were engaged in "defense." Both were purely predatory. Far from any concern for China's integrity, both were busy in endless arguing and treaty-making, private and public, secret and open, specifying just where each could insert the knife in carving up China regardless of whether it was in her largely national-minority inhabited border areas or in her massively Han-inhabited heartland, without getting into a war between themselves.

In the meantime, the aggressions by imperialist powers on and near China's

sea frontiers went on apace. In 1867 and 1871, the American made armed incursions into Korea, China's neighbor on the Northeast (on the second occasion they killed 350 Koreans by naval bombardment). In 1871, alarmed by a Japanese mission to China which seemed to foreshadow an alliance between the two countries, the U.S. egged on Japan to annex outright the Liu Qiu Islands (Okinawa), traditionally close to both China and Japan, which the U.S. Navy had itself been inclined to seize. To make bad relations between China and Japan doubly certain, the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo also helped organize a Japanese attack on China's island province of Taiwan where the American landings had been made in the 1850's and again in 1867. A U.S. transport was chartered to carry the Japanese troops, and C. W. Legendre, an American official who knew the island, acted as a guide to the expedition. A landing was actually made in 1874, but the Japanese later withdrew only to return for a full occupation in 1894.

After 1869 the opening of the Suez Canal, which so greatly shortened the shipping distance between Europe and China, made it possible for western naval as well as merchant vessels to sail to the Far East much more quickly, safely and cheaply than they used to do previously — all the way around South Africa. Thus the Canal, fruit of imperialist aggression against Egypt, increased the economic and military pressure of imperialism on China. Here we can see how historically just, as well as necessary for her own security, was liberated China's whole-hearted support for Egypt's resolute recovery from the colonialists in 1956 of this important waterway, which so closely affects the destinies of all Asia.

By the middle of the 1880's, two states which had long been China's peaceful neighbor — Burma and Vietnam — fell prey to the armed invasions of Britain and France respectively. They became colonies from which China's southwestern borders were subjected to threat and infiltration.

Seeing in industry — and particularly military industry — the "secret" of western armed might, a "westernizing" group of Chinese feudal officials sought to prop up the strength of the dynasty by setting up some industrial enterprises in China. As time went on, they were encouraged by the example of

Japan, which was building a formidable industry without shaking the imperial throne or basically upsetting the social structure. Between the end of the Taiping rising and the early 1880's, Li Hongzhang, Zeng Guofan and Zuo Zongtang promoted a few arsenals, dockyards, coal mines, shipping lines and later textile mills — under the management of government bureaucrats.

This first appearance of machine production in China, however, proved to be of very little significance either to China's economic development or to her national defense. Most of the early industrial enterprises were destined to be destroyed, go bankrupt or pass under foreign control. In Japan, after the 1860's, the big merchants and feudal forces had created an alliance that led to industrial growth on the basis of a still largely feudal agriculture. In China, by contrast, the "westernizing" officials kept private capitalists out of industry, seeking to monopolize everything themselves.

Another reason why China did not go the way of Japan was that her circumstances in foreign relations were different. Japan was patronized, as we have seen, by the United States. And Britain was beginning to regard her as a useful counterweight to Czarist Russia in the Far East — and strengthening her for this purpose. But China, feeble and with a vast and rich territory, was regarded purely as prey, not as an ally. She was a country many foreign powers wished to weaken and ultimately to dismember.

Thus China's home and international situations differed from Japan's, at a time when world capitalism was entering its monopolistic imperialist phase. Thus it was impossible for China to modernize on the "Japanese pattern." She required, as a prerequisite to her modernization, that the fetters of foreign control and of internal feudal power be shattered by a people's revolution directed against both.

The story of the Mawei naval dockyard established by Zuo Zongtang in Fuzhou in 1868 is instructive. All the engineers and most of the foremen and skilled workers of this reputedly national defense undertaking came from France, a country with which Zuo had formed connections at the time when the troops of Napoleon III were helping him in fighting the Taipings. The cost of the French personnel was more reminiscent of tribute than of payment for

work. The foreign artisans got ten times the wage of their Chinese counterparts and the foremen five times. The chief engineer, Prosper Giquel, obtained his job in reward for past services as a mercenary in suppressing the Taiping revolution (he had organized the use of steam-driven river gunboats against it). His salary was princely, 96,000 gold francs a year besides allowances. As a further drain, the dockyard was milked unmercifully by the Chinese feudal officials placed in nominal charge.

Not only was the machinery imported. So was the iron, coal and even lumber required. This was because the dockyard was in no way coordinated with the development of subsidiary enterprises or modern transport inside the country, where all the necessary raw materials were available. The money for operation came out of customs revenues and provincial taxation. The first source was under foreign control as a result of war-imposed unequal treaties. The second was dependent on the whim of the local authorities, not all of whom shared the views of Zuo Zongtang as to the usefulness of the whole affair. As a result, although three thousand persons were employed and a few ships of good quality were built demonstrating the ready aptitude of Chinese workers for new techniques — production virtually stopped after the first five years.

Finally the dockyard was very seriously damaged and a good many of the gunboats it had built were destroyed by the French Navy, which of course had perfect information as to just where to direct its gunfire. In 1884 France launched a war against China in retaliation for the assistance which the Chinese “Black Flag” volunteers, a popular body, gave to the Vietnamese in the fight they were then waging against the French colonizers. The first French action, undertaken without any official proclamation of a state of hostilities, was a surprise naval attack on Fuzhou. A British resident of the city described its results:

Over 3,000 Chinese were killed, and all without a declaration of war. The bodies of the dead floated out to sea on the tide, many of them were borne back on the returning current, and for days it was hardly possible to cross the

river anywhere between the anchorage and the sea 20 miles below without seeing some of these dreadful reminders of treachery and brutality. *

In 1885, after further fighting, the dynasty gave in to the French claims in Vietnam. One of the pressures on it all through had been the persistent surrender-mongering of the U.S. Minister in Beijing, John Russell Young. "The question, as he tried to explain, was not whether China was in the wrong or in the right," wrote the American historian A. Tyler Dennett, "but whether she could afford to fight with a foreign power." Young's stand, Dennett wrote, was that "peace at any price which France might demand was better than conflict."** The United States, as for many years past, combined talk of concern for China's sovereignty and integrity with pressures on her capitulate to every aggressor.

Japan took advantage of the same crisis to force China to agree that neither country would introduce troops into Korea without notifying the other. This provision meant that China gave up her ancient practice of military aid to the neighboring kingdom while Japan, the traditional enemy against whose forays Korea most needed help, was given the right to send troops there.

In 1890, Britain forced the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal to discontinue its long-standing close relations with China, and reduced it to a protectorate. In the same year, China was compelled to recognize Britain's "direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations" of another Himalayan state, Sikkim, with regard to which it was specified that:

... except through and with the permission of the British Government, neither the ruler of that State, nor any of its officers, shall have official

* Smyth, George B., *Causes of Anti-Foreign Feeling in China*, a chapter in *Crisis in China*, New York and London, 1900, p. 29.

** Dennett, *op. cit.*, pp. 492-493. The persistence of U.S. "advice" to China to remain quiescent in the face of successive aggressions may be seen from the theme of a book written decades later, in the 1930's, by an officially favored U.S. Far Eastern scholar, Nathaniel Peffer. It was called "China Must Not Fight Now" (against the Japanese invasion then building up).

relations of any kind, formal or informal, with any other country. *

Both actions demonstrated the British policy of using India as a base for further aggressions, first turning hitherto independent entities into dependent “buffer” protectorates and then reducing the “buffers” to virtual colonies as a stepping stone for penetration into China from her inner-Asian borders.

Following the French war, China made fresh efforts to buy warships and army supplies from abroad and a number of students were sent abroad to study western techniques. Another “modern” official, the Viceroy Zhang Zhidong started the Hanyeping Steel Works in the middle-Yangtze region. A few cotton mills were added to bureaucratic industry and the first railway and telegraph lines began to operate. But how limited all these developments were in their effect was soon shown by the worst military shock China had yet received — her defeat in the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. This time she was beaten not by an established industrial country of the West but by a relatively tiny neighbor, whose contact with the West began more than ten years after the First Opium War.

The Sino-Japanese War broke out over the question of Korea, then in the throes of a big patriotic anti-feudal peasant revolt — the Tonghak insurrection — which, like the Taiping rising, flew religious banners. The King of Korea invited the court at Beijing to send troops across the northern border to fight the insurgents. Japan, citing the Sino-Japanese convention of 1885, took the opportunity to land her own forces in the south. Soon the Chinese army was deployed around Pyongyang, and the Japanese army around Seoul, i.e. they faced each other roughly across the 38th parallel. On July 25, 1894, Japan attacked the Chinese fleet, without declaring war, in line with the French precedent. Two months later she defeated the main Chinese army at Pyongyang driving it back over the Yalu river. Then, extending her operations to China itself, she quickly occupied the naval bases of Lüshun and Weihaiwei, to the

* “Convention Between Great Britain and China Relating to Sikkim and Tiber,” signed in Calcutta March 1890, from Hertslet, G., *Treaties & Conventions Between Great Britain and China and Between China and Foreign Powers*, London, 1908, Vol. I, p.92.

construction of which China had devoted much attention and treasure. By January 1895, China was suing for peace.

Under the Treaty of Shimonoseki, signed in March, the Qing dynasty surrendered Taiwan and the Penghu Islands to Japan. The people of Taiwan did not recognize the treaty and fought on for some time before they were overwhelmed. China also gave up all say in Korea affairs, opened seven new ports to foreign trade, and undertook to pay Japan an indemnity of 200,000,000 ounces of silver. Finally, Japan (and therefore, under the "most favored nation clause," the other foreign powers as well) got the right to set up factories on Chinese soil.

The original articles also included the annexation by Japan of Lüshun (dubbed "Port Arthur" by the western imperialists who blithely attached to it the name of the British Prince Arthur of Connaught, a son of Queen Victoria) and Dalian (at different times Japanized into "Dairen" or Russified into "Dalny").* But this was prevented by the joint warning to Tokyo, backed by naval demonstrations, made by Czarist Russia, Germany and France — all of whom, as will be seen in the next chapter, had their own territorial ambitions. Japan therefore had to relinquish these claims, for a time, contenting herself with an additional indemnity.

In this predatory war, Japan had the tacit backing of Great Britain, which had helped build up her navy, as well as of the U.S. The disgraceful Treaty of Shimonoseki was arranged, in its earlier stages, through a former U.S. Secretary of State who was retained as an adviser by the Qing dynasty government and acted as a channel of U.S. influence upon it. This man was John W. Foster, grandfather of John Foster Dulles.** He it was, in particular, who "persuaded" the Manchu officials to sign away Taiwan.

* Today, in the People's Republic of China Lüshun and Dalian once again bear their original names and as a city are known jointly as Lüda (a combination of the first syllables).

** John Foster Dulles (1888-1959) was the U.S. Secretary of State in 1956 when the first edition of this book appeared. He was an active advocate and practitioner of the Cold War, a rabid atom-bomb waving enemy of the Chinese revolution and of socialism and communism everywhere.

V

THE MENACE OF PARTITION

(1895-1898)

The right to open factories, demanded and secured by an invader of China for the first time, signalized the fact that export of capital was replacing the export of goods as the typical feature of world capitalism. Great industrial-financial monopolies, maturing in Europe, America and Japan, were slicing up the whole world into colonial spheres of investment and exploitation. Within the next few years, China was to feel the full impact of imperialism. It brought her face to face with the imminent prospect of partition, of disappearance as an independent states.

The export of foreign capital to China, which now developed on an unprecedented scale, began not with factories but with bank loans. Prior to 1895, China's debts to foreign banks had been negligible, but in the succeeding five years the government borrowed over £50 million to repay its indemnity to Japan. One part of this money was lent by a Russo-French financial group, another by an Anglo-German group. The security comprised the receipts of the Chinese Customs and a number of internal transport taxes. This meant that a large part of the revenue of the Customs, which was already foreign-administered, ceased to reach the Chinese government at all. Instead, it was sequestered by foreign creditors for many years ahead (the part for the Czarist-French loan was to be paid until 1931 and for the Anglo-German loan till 1943). To make up this loss of income, the ruling dynasty naturally increased

local taxes. So the whole burden fell directly on the people.

In addition to the loans contracted to pay the Japanese indemnity, foreign diplomats began forcing railway loans on China. These were to be spent on construction materials and rolling-stock from the lending country, with repayment guaranteed by a lien on railway property and income (the North China railways built on the proceeds of the British loan of 1898 were mortgaged to the year 1944). In the case of Czarist Russia, which did not have much capital of her own to invest, the procedure was somewhat different. A concession for a railway in Manchuria to be owned by Russia outright was secured by the simple expedient of giving a million-rouble bribe to Li Hongzhang,* who was then conducting foreign affairs for the Qing dynasty. The money to build the railway was borrowed by the Czar from French financiers. Paris supplied the cash and St. Petersburg supplied the assurance of "security" — i.e. the means of political and military pressure on China to make the business both profitable and safe.

All the imperialists were emboldened by China's obvious weakness, as revealed by her defeat at the hands of so junior a power as Japan. They began to grab territorial footholds on her territory, in preparation for the partition of the country.

Germany, using the killing of two missionaries as a pretext, seized the great North China harbor and naval port of Qingdao (Jiaozhou Bay) in November 1897. This was accomplished by a particularly low trick, which an author has described as follows:

A party of German naval officers was landed to pay respects to the

* The full details of this transaction were revealed by the opening of secret Czarist archives following the October Revolution. A circumstantial account of how Li Hongzhang, while on an official journey to Europe, was waylaid by Russian emissaries in Alexandria, Egypt, taken by Russian ship to Odessa and thence to St. Petersburg, and there "bribed on the instalment plan" (part of the money to be paid when he signed away the railway-building rights, and the rest when it was undertaken and completed) appears in A. Romanov, *Imperialism in Manchuria* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1928. And more on Russia's intrigue with Li, strictly at first hand, may be read in the *Memoirs of Count Witte*, English ed., Heinemann, London, 1921. Witte was the Czar's Minister of Finance who handled all dealings with Li Hongzhang.

Chinese commandant and to announce their desire to hold naval manoeuvres in Kiaochow Bay. The Chinese officer, unsuspecting of his callers, invited them to remain ashore for dinner with him.... On the morning of Nov. 14, the cruisers landed 600 marines to take possession of strategic points, followed by the main force of sailors. The Chinese commander and his staff expressed appreciation of the opportunity to see German forces under arms and many Chinese and German soldiers exchanged greetings and courtesies. When all important points were occupied... a message was sent to the Chinese commandant demanding the evacuation of the Tsingtau forts within three hours, leaving fortifications, guns and ammunition undisturbed. Being completely surprised and helpless, the Chinese were unable to offer effective resistance.... Thus, by treachery and duplicity, Admiral Dietrichs had captured Tsingtau and Kiaochow Bay without firing a shot. *

Following the seizure, Germany extorted from China a treaty in March 1898, which gave her a "leasehold" on the eastern Shandong peninsula for 99 years — until 1997!

Three weeks after the Germany treaty, Czarist Russia forced the lease, for 25 years, of the naval base of Lüshun ("Port Arthur") and the commercial port of Dalian ("Dalny") — which she had previously prevented Japan from annexing. The connection, by the way, was not at all accidental, as the loot had been kept out of Japan's hands precisely for this purpose. That Russia, while grabbing her own share, would look with favor on Germany's appropriating Jiaozhou Bay had been agreed upon in a conference between Kaiser Wilhelm II and Czar Nicholas II, whom the former visited at St. Petersburg in the summer of 1897. The two imperialist powers were rivals in Europe but, at this point, accomplices in colonial plunder. Wilhelm's scheme was to get Nicholas's support for his own seizure from China, while egging him on to pocket a place which would certainly, in time, become the focus of a war

* Godshall, W.L., *Tsingtau Under Three Flags*, Shanghai, 1929.

between Japan and Russia. And that, in turn, would make it more difficult for Russia to invest forces in an alliance with Britain and France against German ambitions in Europe. Nicholas, who according to his own Finance Minister Witte was "possessed with an unreasoned desire to seize Far Eastern lands," took the bait with gusto. The mutual payoffs and instigations of this royal pair of vultures are recorded in the so-called "Willy-Nicky correspondence"* (being cousins, they addressed each other by these affectionate names) unveiled and published after the Russian Revolution.

Acting five days after the Russians, Britain appropriated the naval stronghold of Weihaiwei, specifying that she would hold it as long as the Czar held "Port Arthur."

On April 10, 1898 France seized the South China bay of Guangzhouwan (today the site of China's big trading harbor of Zhanjiang).

In 1899 Britain resumed her manoeuvring to push back China's land frontiers. Once again, in the Xinjiang area, she resorted to her habit of utilizing difficult moments for China to press for "border delimitation" by which she meant Chinese recognition of the fruits of constant creeping aggression. The established method of such expansion had been described, a few years earlier, by a high British official directly involved, naturally with the usual references to the needs of "defense." Sir Alfred Lyall, External Affairs Secretary of the Government of India, wrote:

We have usually begun by projecting a political borderline, by interposing, that is, some protected states between our real territories and the power beyond them whose approach seemed to threaten our security. But the result of this manoeuvre has been too often to accelerate our own extension, because we had found ourselves eventually forced (*sic.*) to advance up to the line that our rivals could not be permitted to overstep.**

* Bernstein, H., *The Willy-Nicky Correspondence, Being the Secret and Intimate Telegrams Between the Kaiser and the Tsar*, New York, 1918 and Levine, I.D. (ed.), *Letters from the Kaiser to the Tsar*, New York, 1921.

** Lyall, Sir Alfred, *The Rise of the British Dominion in India*, London, 1893, p. 278.

In the case of China, of course, one could not speak so much of "rivals" as of a victim, and if one substitutes this word the whole picture is clear.

Frankly preparing to slice up China among themselves, the powers defined their respective "spheres of influence" on Chinese soil. The Yangtze valley was allotted to Britain, and so was Tibet. Manchuria (Northeast China) and Mongolia were placed at the disposal of Czarist Russia. Southwest China was to be the bailiwick of both Britain and France. Fujian province was assigned to Japan, Shandong province to Germany.

The scramble for the partition of China coincided with a new phase in the history of the United States. After rapid internal development following the Civil War, the U. S.A. was beginning to outproduce the older powers, and its giant trusts and corporations had emerged as contenders for the redivision of the world. In 1898, the U.S., on the pretext of "liberating" Cuba (which it immediately made into its own semi-colony), fought a war against Spain. The spoils of victory over that senile colonial power included the Spanish possessions in the Pacific — the Philippines and Guam. At the same time, American missionaries and planters in the Hawaiian Islands engineered their annexation by the U.S.

The appetites of youthful American imperialism grew with the eating. Its troops (among them Douglas MacArthur, then a young lieutenant destined in old age to become commander of the U.S. occupation forces in Japan after World War II and of the U.S. aggression in Korea in 1950-51 where his defeat marked the end of the U.S. dream of Asia-wide empire and of his own career) engaged in bloody suppression of the Filipinos,* who had fought Spain in alliance with the U.S. in order to gain freedom, not to find a new colonial master. At the same time, its politicians, while more frank about the limitless ambitions of U.S. expansionism than was the later fashion, oozed with the pious cant which inevitably accompanies the sabre-rattling of bidders for

* The great Chinese democratic revolutionary Sun Yat-sen, while in exile in Japan (from 1899 onward), gave help to the Filipino "Insurrectos" under Emilio Aguinaldo, as he did later to the Tongking Club, an organization of patriotic anti-feudal Vietnamese intellectuals in his subsequent exile in Hanoi. Dr. Sun often stressed that the liberation of China was inseparable from the anti-colonial struggle in all Asia.

global power. Here is one such effusion, by Senator Beveridge of Indiana in January 1900:

The Philippines are ours forever.... And just beyond the Philippines are China's illimitable markets. We will not retreat from either... will not renounce our part in the mission of our race, trustees under the God, of the civilization of the world.... The power that rules the Pacific is the power that rules the world.... That power will forever be the American republic. *

The U.S. was still not yet strong enough, however, to carry out its ambition to monopolize "China's illimitable markets," where powerful rivals were already dug in. Nor did its power match its determination ultimately to make the Pacific "an American lake." Finally, even in the after-flush of victory against Spain, by no means all of the American people, or American public figures, approved of expansion abroad — the opposition in fact was wide and outspoken among labor, the farmers, the Populists and inside the Democratic Party. The approach of the U.S. government was therefore a gradual one, of diplomatic preparation. As a first step, its Secretary of State John Hay, in 1899, proclaimed the famous doctrine of the "Open Door" in China.

American official pronouncements have ever since presented this action as a step in the defense of Chinese integrity and sovereignty. Actually it was nothing of the kind. In fact it was the exact opposite. Hay's "Open Door" note, which was addressed to the older imperialist powers, did not dispute their right to territory and advantages torn by force from the living body of China. All it required was that commerce within each "sphere of influence" or "leased territory" be equally open to all. (One U.S. writer, Owen Lattimore, has wittily called this the "me too" policy.) The calculation was that U.S. trade and investments, by the power of the dollar, could thus penetrate into all parts of China without hindrance. Such economic pressure on all the rival forces would make it easier to oust them politically and militarily at a later stage. China

* Dulles, Foster Rhea, *China and American, the Story of Their Relations Since 1784*, Princeton, 1946, p.104.

herself, of course, was not asked whether she wanted to “open” her door or close it.

Naturally, countries militarily strong but economically of second rank (like Czarist Russia) were decidedly cool to Hay’s ideal. Britain, however, supported it, because she was then still the world’s supreme financial power, and thought it would enable her to penetrate the spheres of influence of her rivals — Russia, France, Germany, Japan — without endangering her own. In fact, the whole “Open Door” scheme was worked out by the United States and Britain jointly, each seeking its own advantage, and of course seeking to take advantage of the other. Joint Anglo-American sponsorship, and the desire to avoid sharp conflict which none of the rival powers in the field were then prepared to undertake, led to qualified acceptance by all — though all were ready to violate the arrangement when their strength allowed.

The motives of this idea of “peaceful coexistence” among the imperialists, really a “peaceful” carve-up of the peoples they were swallowing, were graphically expressed by the British diplomat Valentine Chirol.

“Live and let live” is the only principle upon which the scramble for Africa could possibly have been conducted without plunging Europe into sanguinary struggles, and whether the scramble for the Far East be near at hand or whether it may yet be averted, the same principle can alone secure a peaceful settlement of the Far Eastern question. *

The “scramble” Chirol predicted began very quickly. In 1897-98, modern imperialism, within the space of a few months, created a greater menace to China’s existence than all her previous defeats — in the Opium War of 1840-42, the Second (Anglo-French) Opium War of 1858-60, the Sino-French War of 1885 and the Sino-Japanese War of 1894. Moreover, all the seizures of 1897-98 were made purely by threat, without a shot being fired, clearly showing the complete bankruptcy of the Qing dynasty government.

* Chirol, Valentine, *The Far Eastern Question*, London, 1896.

The political reactions to these events reflected the shifts that had taken place in Chinese society in the previous decades.

China would face the turn from the 19th to the 20th century in a miserable state, indeed in danger of national extinction. This needs recalling now — at the turn from the 20th century to the 21st. Only then can the magnitude of the results of her mid-20th century liberation be understood. Today China is free of all foreign dominance, strong enough to defend that freedom, high in standing internationally, and developing her domestic economy at a speed seldom seen anywhere on such a scale. Nor need she fear that loans or investment from foreign sources, though at a profit to the latter, can subjugate or impair her sovereignty.

In the next chapter we can round out the events of the 1890's, and examine their internal political environment and consequences in shifts in China's society which in time would precipitate other, far greater changes.

VI

REFORMISTS AND DISILLUSION

(1898)

The boldest answer to the question of how to save the country came from a group of young patriots, recruited mainly among students who had been sent abroad. The outstanding figure among them was Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the great and tireless democratic revolutionary, who as early as 1894 had formed a political association — the Xing Zhong Hui or “Revive China Society.” His program then was to overthrow the Manchu (Qing) dynasty and with it the feudal monarchy as a whole, and establish a western-type bourgeois Republic, something like the United States of America or France. Under this banner, an abortive armed revolt had already taken place, in 1895, in Guangzhou.

Sun Yat-sen represented the more radical section of the new Chinese bourgeoisie. The class had begun to find more scope in the big cities, particularly in South and Central China, after the abject failure of the industrial monopolies of the “westernized bureaucrats.” In 1897 there were already 30 private cotton mills in the Yangtze provinces.

Sun also represented the outlook of the greater part of the Chinese abroad. The number of such emigrants had multiplied greatly during and after the Taiping rising. From the 1860’s, when the Qing government had permitted the foreign powers to recruit “coolie” labor in China under the Tianjin Treaties, large numbers of ruined peasants and city poor had been exported to work in Malaya, Hawaii, the U.S.A., Canada and the West Indies. In the course of time,

some of them had become entrepreneurs in their own right. Subjected to colonial and racial discrimination, the "Overseas Chinese," as they were called, were anxious to see a strong, modern China that could extend its protection to them in the places where they lived. The businessmen among them also wanted a field of investment, free from foreign competition, in the home country. Like the young revolutionaries in China itself, they had no stake in the monarchy or in the feudal Confucian doctrines. The political form that attracted them was the bourgeois Republic.

At the same time a reformist, non-revolutionary movement arose among a section of the officials and scholars. They represented the thinking of the more moneyed and conservative wing of the new industrial and commercial bourgeoisie — the part that sprang from the landlord class and the compradores. They differed in tactics from the "westernizing" feudalists, who thought the mere borrowing of technology would save the old order intact. Unlike the former, they wanted to modify the archaic monarchy into one of the Japanese type in which the bourgeois groups would share power with the feudal ones within a framework of limited constitutionalism. But they differed fundamentally from the Sun Yat-sen group because they had no idea of ending the dynasty or monarchic order. Their spokesman was the scholar Kang Youwei, a man well read in western bourgeois political theory as well as in the Chinese classics.

Kang Youwei and his followers recalled the Taiping period with horror and recommended their "moderate changes" to the emperor's court as a means of averting a new peasant revolution. This too distinguished them from Sun Yat-sen's "Revive China Society" which held the traditions of the Taipings in deep respect. True, many of Sun Yat-sen's ideas of republican government came from the bourgeois political theories he had imbibed from a western education. But his revolutionary spirit stemmed more from the traditions of rural rebellion, and particularly the Taiping Uprising, absorbed during his peasant childhood. However, the Sun Yat-sen group also, in actual practice, had little connection with the peasant masses. It placed its hope for revolution on the organization of conspiracies among the younger intellectuals and army

officers.

It is characteristic of the nature of the Reform Movement that Kang Youwei began it by organizing civil-service examination graduates to petition the emperor to take the lead in measures to solve the national crisis. The petition, though prevented by court officials from reaching its destination, was spread throughout the country as a political program. Kang himself propagated it in energetic and wide-ranging tours, and it was circulated by schools and journals set up by his sympathizers. Finally an audience was obtained with the young Emperor Guangxu who had just attained his majority and was struggling to wrest power from the regent, the Empress Dowager Cixi who was his aunt. The emperor's party saw the Reform Movement, with its rising popularity, as a political base against the feudal diehards around Cixi. An international factor was also present. Cixi's clique was at that time inclined to lean on Czarist Russia, with the result that the emperor and the reformers were favored by Britain, America and Japan.

In the hundred days between June 11 and September 11, 1898, the emperor issued a series of unprecedented decrees actually drafted by Kang Youwei. He ordered the abolition of the classical Confucian tests for civil servants and the establishment of modern public education, including a university. He also decreed the setting up of a Committee on Agriculture, Manufactures and Trade with the right of direct access to the emperor and the duty to promote national railway, industrial and mining development, set up agricultural and industrial schools in all provinces and introduce the use of modern farm machinery. Other decrees called for reforms in judicial procedure; universal military training; abolition of do-nothing official sinecures held by the Manchu aristocracy; and obligation of the traditional parasitic Manchu military formations to contribute to their own support by tilling the land and other work.

The result was not reform but a reactionary *coup d'état*. The old feudal aristocracy showed that it was not to be forced into radical changes by any paper decrees, even imperial ones. The emperor Guangxu himself was put under detention by the court clique headed by the empress dowager — and remained under arrest for ten years until his death in 1908. Kang Youwei and

other reformist leaders sought safety in flight. Those who did not succeed in getting away were arrested and barbarously executed — by being cut in half at the waist.

With all its limitations, the reform group included some sincere men of great intellect, and courage. Their activities helped to awaken a good part of the educated youth of China to the rottenness of the absolute monarchy, and to acquaint them with the ideas of western bourgeois democracy. Nevertheless the movement ended in a fiasco because it failed completely to face any of the fundamental tasks which the Chinese people needed to solve.

The 1898 reformers refused to face the true nature of the feudal dynasty and the whole traditional monarchic system. They were blind to the fact that the power it embodied was not that of any one person, even if he happened to be emperor, but of the whole reactionary ruling class. Politically, they were spokesmen of the compromising upper bourgeoisie. Personally, they were largely of landlord or official origin. Therefore they had no program for depriving the rulers of the social base of their power, which lay in the feudal economy and social order. They offered absolutely nothing to the peasantry — the mass of the Chinese people — the only force capable of sweeping away the obstacles to China's progress.

Nor did the reformers have any idea of the inevitably predatory nature of imperialism. Burning with indignation at their country's humiliations and defeats, they nevertheless accepted the imperialist lie that China's backwardness made her somehow undeserving of being treated as an equal in foreign relations. They thought, therefore, that "imitating the West" would in itself gain China respect and immunity from aggression, as well as support in her new course.

Following the reactionary *coup d'état*, the constitutional monarchist teachings of Kang Youwei lost their influence. Among the new political currents in China, that of Sun Yat-sen and his followers took the lead. This change, however, did not bring its full results for several years. In the meantime, the Chinese peasantry was once more to explode in revolt, this time directly against imperialism in the fire of the Yi He Tuan rising.

VII

THE YI HE TUAN ("BOXER")

RISING OF THE PEOPLE (1899-1901)

The Yi He Tuan or "Boxers," as they were called by the foreigners because their practices included a system of physical training that resembled boxing, began as a peasant anti-Manchu secret society of the traditional mystical type. In 1898, in Shandong province, this society became a center of resentment against the Germans, who were turning the province into their colony in a particularly brutal manner — not only exploiting it economically but also burning villages to punish them for "unfriendliness." Moreover, the people of Shandong, as the throughout North China, were becoming more and more enraged by the missionaries who were behaving quite openly as advance agents for the conquest of parts of China by their respective governments. Popular anger was brought to a head by the imperial decree of March 15, 1899, issued under the pressure of France which had set herself up as the "protector of missions," giving extraordinary privileges and power over the people to Roman Catholic clerics of all nationalities. As a British writer noted at the time:

The position of equality with viceroys and governors thus given to the bishops, and equality with provincial treasurers, provincial judges, *taotais* and prefects given to the various orders of priests... gave the Roman Catholics an influence of which the people had good reason to believe they

would not be slow to avail themselves. In lawsuits between their adherents and non-Christian people, the latter had, or thought they had, no chance... there was general complaint of the constant interference of the priests in litigation.*

Actually, though only the Catholics enjoyed official rank, all missions were used by their various governments as agencies and observation posts, and particularly valuable ones because they could operate "legally" all over China and not just in the "treaty ports." These abuses at a time when China was being openly surveyed for inter-imperialist partition, and not "mad fanaticism" as European historians have asserted, made the peasant rebels of 1899-1901 anti-foreign and anti-missionary. This is what led them to regard Chinese Christians as accomplices and proteges of the foreign aggressors. It is true that the Yi He Tuan did not have an advanced social program or forms of organization. It is true that, in both these respects, they were less developed than the Taipings a half century earlier. Nevertheless, it is a crude imperialist libel to call the movement "reactionary." On the contrary, it was a heroic, spontaneous effort of the common people of China to defend her national existence against the "cultured" robbers who wanted to vivisect her.

This was recognized by many democratic figures. For example, Mark Twain warmly defended the "Boxers" and satirized the "defenders of civilization" who called for a crusade against them. Though not a revolutionary he was moved by a powerful sense of justice and spoke up at the height of the anti-Chinese hysteria in the U.S. in his trenchant "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" and other essays. So infuriated was he at the imperialist role of the United States in the Far East that he declared the U.S. flag could no longer honestly be flown and suggested, as a fitting change, a banner "with the white stripes painted black and the stars replaced by the skull and crossbones." "It is all China now and my sympathies are with the Chinese"

* Smyth, George B., *Causes of Anti-Foreign Feeling in China*, a chapter (pp. 335) in *The Crisis in China*, a compendium of contributions to the *North American Review*, New York, 1900.

he wrote in a letter at the time. "I hope they will drive all the foreigners out and keep them out for good."*

Another U.S. literary star of the time, Stephen Crane, author of the much read anti-war *Red Badge of Courage* — penned a biting skit based on the German seizure of Shandong — and the pretext that it was to compensate for two murdered missionaries. In the play Prince Henry of Prussia, who had indeed visited China, urges more missionaries to get themselves killed for the German Fatherland. When one re-appears badly manhandled — but still alive — the prince mercilessly berates him as unpatriotic. For nothing less than a *dead* missionary could secure territory and railway building rights for the Reich at the current "rate of exchange."

Lenin trenchantly answered the imperialist, chauvinist attacks on the Yi He Tuan fighters as "anti-foreign":

Yes! It is true the Chinese hate the Europeans, but which Europeans do they hate, and why? The Chinese do not hate the European people, they have never had any quarrel with them. They hate the European capitalists and the governments which are obedient to the capitalists. How can the Chinese refrain from hating those who came to China solely for the sake of gain; who have utilized their boasted civilization solely for the purpose of deception, plunder and violence; who have waged war against China in order to win the right to trade in opium with which to drug the people (the wars of England and France with China in 1856); and the policy of plunder under the guise of spreading Christianity.**

As a proletarian internationalist Lenin considered it his duty to focus his attack on the rulers of his own country — Russia. He also wrote:

* Letter to Rev. Joseph T. Twichell, August 12, 1900 (quoted in Foner, Philip F., *Mark Twain: Social Critic*, New York, 1958).

** Lenin, V.I., "The Chinese War," an article in the first issue of the Bolshevik newspaper *Iskra*, December 1900.

If we are to call things by their right names, we must say that the European governments (the Russian government among the very first) have already started to partition China. They began to rob China as ghouls rob corpses, and when the seeming corpse attempted to resist, they flung themselves upon it like savage beasts, burning whole villages, and drowning in the Amur River unarmed inhabitants, their wives and their children....

How is our government's senseless policy in China to be explained? Who benefits by it? The benefit goes to a handful of capitalist magnates....

Particularly did he castigate, and call for struggle against, all attempts to poison the ordinary man with chauvinism. Of these he said:

... the policy of the Czarist government in China is not only a mockery of the interests of the people — its aim is to corrupt the political consciousness of the masses.... But the Chinese people have at no time and in no way oppressed the Russian people. The Chinese people suffer from the same evils as those from which the Russian people suffer.... Hence the duty of all class-conscious workers is to rise with all their might against those who are stirring up national hatred and diverting the attention of the people from their real enemies....*

In glaring contrast not only to this proletarian stand, but also to the blunt plain-speaking of the petty-bourgeois radical Mark Twain, was the attitude of the major revisionist of Marxism at that time, Eduard Bernstein, the German proponent of "evolutionary socialism". Bernstein used the misdeeds of other imperialisms not to condemn but to justify German imperialist participation in these crimes. Arguing against German socialist publications which took an internationalist line and opposed colonial aggression against China, he wrote:

It is a matter of no interest to the German people that China should

* Lenin, *ibid.*

be divided up.... But the German people has a great interest in this... that in all questions concerning China Germany should have word to say. Its commerce in China demands such a right to protest. In so far as the acquisition of Kiaochow Bay is a means of securing this right to protest... there is no reason in my opinion for social democracy to cry out against it in principle.

And instead of fighting the capitalist-touted ideas of a "superior" (i. e. capitalist) European civilization entitled to loot the peoples of Asia and Africa, Bernstein tried to get the workers to identify themselves with "their own" imperialist ruling class, not with other workers round the world. International socialism, he argued, was a far-off ideal. In the meantime, and note his chauvinist use of "we" and "our":

If we take into account the fact that Germany now imports yearly a considerable amount of colonial products, we must also say to ourselves that the time may come when it will be desirable to draw at least a part of these products from our own colonies.... Moreover, only a conditional right of savages to use the land occupied by them can be recognized. The higher civilization ultimately can claim a higher right. Not the conquest, but the cultivation of the land gives the historical title to its use. According to my judgement, these are the essential points of view which should decide the position of social democracy as regards the question of colonial policy. *

Social imperialism (socialism in words, imperialism in deeds) can be said to have begun with Bernstein. Unfortunately it did not end there, or remain confined to its social-democratic variety.

The social-imperialists who gained control over the U.S.S.R. in the

* Bernstein, Eduard, *Die Vorraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozial-Demokratie*, 1899 (quotations from English translation in Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism, A Criticism and Affirmation*, N. Y., 1961, pp. 172 and 177-9).

Brezhnev era (1966-1982) were as far from Lenin as Bernstein was from Marx. They theorized on "limited sovereignty," for others, and "international division of labor," in which those others would supply the "colonial goods." They repeated, in essence, Bernstein's equation of "higher civilization" with "higher right" and "cultivation" with "historical right." Such was their insistence on fishing in the home waters of countries that did not happen to have supertrawlers so that "resources will not be left unused." And their thesis that oil outside their own borders constituted an "international reserve." To cap all, in their vendetta against China they tried to scare westerners with that old racist bogey, the "Yellow Peril."

Loss of sovereignty and overweening racist arrogance were what the Yi He Tuan were fighting against. Their tragedy was that they lacked clear policies, were isolated from the other revolutionary groups in China, and lacked understanding of the relationship of forces either at home or internationally. This made them an easy prey to deception and doomed them to defeat.

The feudal rulers at Beijing, seeing the movement was spreading like lightning, were fearful of being swept away by it. They therefore pretended to put themselves at its head, issued eloquent patriotic-sounding proclamations and, under popular pressure, actually "declared war" on the imperialist powers. But even as fighting was going on inside Beijing itself, they sent a slavish circular appeal to the same powers, and sank to the depth of writing to each in turn: "Your noble country... has never exhibited any covetous desire for territory." They begged the foreign governments not to be taken in by appearances and make the mistake of suspecting the dynasty of "favoring the common folk." Finally they stated that "China is at her wit's end to raise funds for armies... and in order to get out of this difficult tangle, she can but have recourse to the assistance of your noble country."

In plain words, the dynasty was asking for a bribe in return for which its troops were to be turned against the patriotic "rebels." To leave the way open for such betrayal, the Empress Dowager sent food supplies to the Beijing Legation Quarter being besieged by her own soldiers. And local viceroys in every area except North China, where the "Boxers" were too strong, took no

part whatsoever in the hostilities. Instead, they continued to deal with the enemy as though no war was taking place.

Taking advantage of the situation, the invaders mobilized a strong force composed of British, American, German, Czarist Russian, French, Japanese, Italian and even Austro-Hungarian contingents and stormed into Beijing, which they delivered to rapine and slaughter. The British eyewitness B. L. Putnam Weale gives some episodes from the sack of China's capital, which far outdid the carnage of 1860:

A curious young fellow from one of the Legations... again and again volunteered to play the part of executioner.... This man had done it always with a shotgun, and he seemed to gloat over it.... He was madly excited and so soon as he saw me made a long broken speech which I shall never forget.... "The wells near the Eastern Gates, have you seen them, where all the women and girls have been jumping in? They were afraid of the troops...." Then he came up to me and whispered how soldiers were behaving after they had outraged women.... He said that our own inhuman soldiery had invited him to stay and see.*

Vividly describing how every house in the city was robbed, Weale wrote of the foreign troops as "an endless procession of looting men," and told how afterwards, on top of the blood and the ruins, they began to sell and barter their spoils so that "all our armies are becoming armies of traders."

And after the actual fighting was all over, there arrived the special German expedition of 20,000 men under Field-Marshal Count von Waldersee. Before their departure from Bremerhaven, Kaiser Wilhelm II, who had long been peddling the "Yellow Peril" hoax in Europe, instructed the embarking troops in the true spirit of imperialist blood and thunder:

"Remember when you meet the foe that quarter will not be given and

* Putnam Weale, B. L., *Indiscreet Letters from Beijing*, London, 1900 (quotation is from China edition, 1922), p.362.

that prisoners will not be taken. Wield your weapons so that for a thousand years no Chinese will dare look askance at a German. Pave the way once for all for civilization."

By that time, most of the other European troops had been withdrawn, and there was no Chinese force in the field. Nonetheless, writes a chronicler of these events, "Punitive expeditions became a feature of the German occupation. Every petty officer seemed privileged to devastate the countryside. Villages that had been used as Boxer headquarters or where arms were discovered were burned to ashes and the inhabitants killed or driven away."*

Thus was "the way for civilization" paved, further educating and hardening the endlessly insulted, endlessly suffering but also endlessly resisting people of China.

The Yi He Tuan rising had been betrayed and smashed, but it had also taught the imperialist powers a lesson. Although China had once again been defeated and humiliated, there was less talk than there had been before of the easy "partition" of the country. To the rivalry of the powers who could not decide how to cut the pie, something new was added. This was fear of what the people could do if provoked too far.

Archibald Colquhoun, correspondent of the London *Times*, warned ominously against underestimating "what the disruption of a polity embracing 300 million Asiatics really means." He argued that China, under Qing dynasty rule, "kept on her legs... a living mine of wealth... the great undeveloped estate which the present generation of Anglo-Saxons have to leave to their ever-increasing offspring." His conclusion was that arms alone would never decide the issue, and that "the infiltration of capital and its skilled direction into China is the proper lever."** The Qing rulers had forgiven the foreign imperialists, because they needed them against the people. In the same way, the foreign powers forgave the reactionary rulers of China, despite their dec-

* Godschall, Prof. W. L., *Tsingtau Under Three Flags*, Shanghai, 1929, p. 136.

** Colquhoun, Archibald F., *The Far Eastern Crisis*, an article (pp. 109-136) in the compendium *The Crisis in China*, New York, 1900.

laration of war, because they were indispensable to imperialism. Having proved their ability to delude and disrupt a popular movement, they were regarded as a more valuable watchdog than ever.

The "Boxer Protocol," the treaty imposed on China after the rising, reflected this approach. Here is a brief summary of what it did:

The monarchic regime was finally degraded to a mere agent of the will of the imperialist conquerors. Provisions unprecedented in international practice obligated it to execute or "condemn to suicide" a number of its own officials who had taken the war too seriously. It was also forced to "suspend the official (civil service) examinations during five years in all towns where foreigners were murdered or subjected to harsh treatment" and to issue an edict "perpetually forbidding, under pain of death, membership in an anti-foreign society."

The biggest indemnity yet imposed, amounting to U.S. \$ 500 million, was to be paid not only to the major powers but also to Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and the Scandinavian countries — in installments from the year 1901 to the year 1940.

Ten powers received the right to station soldiers in Beijing itself "to guard their legations" in a section of China's own capital in which "Chinese shall not have the right to reside."

Foreign troops were also to occupy the entire railway from Beijing to the sea. As a result several countries maintained garrisons at Beijing, Tianjin and Shanhaiguan for the following 40 years.

One purpose of all this was revealed succinctly in Article XI which stated: "The Chinese government has engaged to negotiate amendments *judged useful by the foreign governments* to the treaties of commerce and navigation and other subjects touching commercial relations, with a view to facilitating these.*"

* Italics mine — I.E.

VIII

TOWARD BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION

(1901-1911)

In the ten years between the signing of the “Boxer Protocol” in 1901 and the overthrow of the monarchy in the bourgeois revolution of 1911, the situation in China developed very rapidly.

China’s economic dependence came to match her political subjection. The country was turned into what Sun Yat-sen called a “hypo-colony,” a milch-cow not of one but of many foreign powers.

Investment by imperialist finance capital reached some U.S. \$1,500 million. Railways, built mainly by enforced foreign loans, increased elevenfold from only 560 miles in 1902 to over 6,000 miles in 1912. The function of these railways was to provide dividends for foreign bondholders, and to facilitate the export of Chinese resources and the import of foreign manufactures. Likewise, they served foreign strategic interests. Three lines, including one to Beijing, were guarded by foreign troops.

Foreign interests also penetrated and took over the industrial establishments founded by the “modern” bureaucrats in the previous period.

Li Hongzhang’s Kaiping coal mines were a notable example. They came under imperialist (mainly British) ownership through the perfidious manipulations of a U.S. engineer working nominally as a technical advisor to help the Chinese government develop its mineral resources, but actually for London financiers whose aim was to steal them. His name was Herbert Hoover. His

self-stated idea of the purpose of mining was that it should serve “the great science of making the most money out of some other human being.”* And he was to go on — after practicing this “science” in Australia, South Africa, Nicaragua, Nigeria and Burma — to be widely advertised as a “great philanthropist,” to rise to the office of President of the United States (1928-32) and to live well into the 1960’s as a “revered elder statesman” of its ruling class. Hoover is worth studying as the prototype of imperialist “adviser.” He grabbed control of the Kaiping mines in 1900 by intimidating the Chinese official who was his superior (not difficult to do in the year when North China was being ravaged by the troops of eight invading foreign powers) and by promising that there would be large foreign investments in the company after the take-over. The new foreign investment and holding concern for the Kaiping mines, of which Hoover was made one of the directors, was the Chinese Engineering & Mining Co. Ltd. of London. It became the nucleus of the “Kailan Mining Administration”, organized in 1912. Actually, as Justice Joyce of the British Chancery Court mordantly declared in London when hearing a suit brought by the mulcted Chinese against Hoover and his colleagues, the latter invested not a penny. “The promoters, as I understand,” said the judge as recorded in the *Times* of March 2, 1905, “distributed the shares and allotted the debentures among themselves and their friends, who I suppose still have the debentures and the 424,993 fully paid-up shares for which nothing has, in fact, been paid.” Besides British interests, a number of Belgians closely identified with the brutal exploitation of the Congo (Emile Franqui, Chevalier de Wouters and others) were brought into the new company. **

In China, besides the appropriation of her mines, Hoover distinguished himself by his part in reviving the “coolie” trade. The Kaiping mines, while he was a director, shipped not only coal but also men — some 50,000 Chinese workers to toil as contract slaves, for 25 cents a day, with \$50 compensation in

* Hoover’s letter, written from Johannesburg on July 15, 1904, to the *Mining Journal* of London (photostat in Hamill, *op. cit.*, facing p.202).

** More detailed material on the Kaiping mines take-over, and on Hoover in China, may be found in Carlson, Ellsworth, *The Kaiping Mines*, Harvard, 1957 and Hamill, John, *The Strange Career of Mr. Hoover Under Two Flags*, New York, 1931.

case of death, in the mines of Transvaal in South Africa in 1904-1910.*

Zhang Zhidong's Hanyeping Iron and Steel Works, instead of becoming a base for Chinese heavy industry and national defense, suffered a like fate. It resorted first to German, then Japanese loans. Its colonial plight was clearly revealed by the statement of the American steel tycoon Charles Schwab (Bethlehem Steel Co.) that he found it cheaper to import Chinese pig iron for his works in San Francisco than to ship it from his own plant in Pittsburgh.

Anshan and Fushun in the Northeast, rich in iron and coal respectively, were tight in the grip of Japan.

The foreign commerce of China more than doubled, but its composition made the country a raw material appendage and dumping ground for imperialism. China's adverse trade balance continued to grow. She went deeper and deeper into debt.

United States, British, French, Czarist Russian, German and Japanese banks, branches of the major financial monopolies in their home countries, were set up in important Chinese cities.

Within Chinese society, this resulted in the further growth of the "compradore" bourgeoisie. Commercial "compradores" became Chinese sub-agents of foreign enterprises, through whom the latter introduced their goods into the remotest parts of the country and bought up, in every corner, the materials they wished to export. Bank compradores represented a combination of alien finance capital with domestic landlord and usury capital and a section of the merchants. The whole group was the all pervasive agency of imperialism in the political field as well as the economic.

At the same time, however, there was a significant growth of Chinese-owned light industry, especially in textiles and flour-milling. This represented a further development of the national bourgeoisie. This part of the capitalist class, unlike the compradores, was interested in a strong, independent and

* Indentured for three years, the Chinese imported to the Transvaal were confined to the mine compounds forbidden to acquire property or follow a trade, and subject to flogging, v. Phillips, L., *Transvaal Problems*, London, 1905 and Payne, E.G., *An Experiment in Alien Labor*, Chicago, 1912. Also Hamill, *op. cit.*, pp.157-167.

economically developed China.

The national bourgeoisie deeply resented its dependence on foreign imports of machinery, and even of raw materials (e. g. cotton from the U.S. and India) which only feudal backwardness and the lack of interior communications prevented from being supplied domestically. Its enterprises were subjected to the daily pressure of foreign goods which continued to pour in under the 5 per cent maximum import tariff. Even more maddeningly, they were forced to compete on unfavorable terms with foreign plants in China itself (under the extraterritorial system, the latter were exempt from Chinese law and taxes). The constant inflow of foreign investments backed by imperialist military and political pressure, which the Qing dynasty did nothing to resist, seriously restricted the participation of the Chinese national bourgeoisie in the development of heavy industry and communications in its own country.

The ultra-reactionary nature of imperialist investment in old China, almost divested of sovereignty, and the way it preserved and profited from feudal vestiges there can be seen from the development of the official U.S. attitude to one such remnant. This was the troublesome *likin* or internal transit tax which impeded the formation of a countrywide market for the products of capitalist enterprise, both Chinese and foreign. As an exporter of goods, the U.S. had long demanded that the *likin* be abolished. But with the entry of the Wall Street financiers into the scramble for railway loans and concessions, a new concept arose. Assistant Secretary of State, William Phillips, wrote his chief, U.S. Secretary of State Knox in 1900 advising that the tax be preserved on the grounds that "should the occasion arise in the future when our banking interests were invited to participate in a loan to China, I fully believe that they would... gladly accept the *likin* as security." In accordance with this recommendation, the U.S. altered its official policy and the retention of the fettering *likin* came to serve the interests both of China's feudal rulers and of imperialism, expressing their close alliance and the subordination of the former to the latter. *

* The State Department correspondence is quoted from Vivier, Charles, *The United States and China, 1906-13, A Study of Finance and Diplomacy*. Rutgers University Press, U.S.A., 1955.

The modern Chinese industrial working class developed more rapidly than the Chinese capitalists. It was also more united and represented a much bigger force. The working class grew with each railway or factory that was built, regardless of whether it was foreign or Chinese-owned, or under bureaucratic or private management. The workers, wherever employed, were faced with the same problems.

Since China was an agrarian country, almost all sections of the home bourgeoisie were connected, to a greater or lesser extent, with landlordism, until then the main source of capital accumulation. This was another source of its wavering with regard to the needed house-cleaning in Chinese society. The workers, on the other hand, were in their great majority recruited from the peasantry and retained their links with the villages. The age-old grievance and rebellious spirit of China's feudally oppressed and exploited toilers of the soil burned in them together with their new workers' grievances. They had no stake whatsoever in China's old society.

The multi-millioned peasantry itself was exploited not only directly by Chinese landlords but also, increasingly, by foreign firms. Imperialist interests could dictate the prices of the agricultural produce the peasants sold, and of the manufactured goods they needed to buy. They also fixed the freight rates on the new railways and steamships. The position of the peasantry was aggravated by the double burden. The proportion of tenantry, in the most populous provinces, grew to 70 per cent or more.

All these shifts made China a different country from that of the Taiping period, or even the recent "Yi He Tuan" rising. The throne still stood but society was changing. All the main classes that have figured in the Chinese people's revolution of our own day had made their appearance.

So had the major personalities. While Sun Yat-sen was entering on a decisive period of his activity, Mao Zedong, born in 1893, was growing into young manhood in the Central China countryside. Sun, as a child, had imbibed the influence of the Taipings. Mao's first impressions were of the sharp crisis caused by the imperialist invasion, the animated debate between reformers and revolutionaries on ways out of the national humiliation, and the con-

stant recurrence of peasant unrest and its cruel suppression.

Now let us look at some actual events of the decade.

Externally, the major imperialist powers were busy with the political and economic consolidation of the vast colonial territories they had seized in Asia and Africa during 1880-1900. At the same time, they were busy manoeuvring for two bloody conflicts for the redivision of this loot, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 and the holocaust of the First World War in 1914. Mutual rivalries, as well as fright given them by the "Boxers," as they called the Yi He Tuan, prevented the powers from proceeding immediately to the final partition of China. But with each year the imperialist yoke was fastened more firmly on China's neck by a series of robber acts and pacts.

In 1902, Britain signed an alliance with Japan, serving their joint contention with Czarist Russia. Its preamble referred hypocritically to "peace in the Extreme East" and "maintaining the independence and territorial integrity" of both China and Korea. But its very first article specified "special interests" and the "right" of armed intervention — for Britain in China and for Japan in Korea. This was the treaty that gave Japan the backing she needed to attack Czarist Russia in 1904-05. All land battles in this struggle were fought on Chinese soil. China, though a neutral, was the ultimate loser since Japan established herself in Korea, on the former Russian railways in South Manchuria and in the Russian leaseholds in Dalian (Dairen) and Lüshun (Port Arthur), all springboards for new aggression.

While Japan and Russia were preparing and fighting a sanguinary war over Manchuria (Northeast China), Britain seized the opportunity to invade Tibet in China's Southwest. Her pretext was the appearance as "religious tutor" to the Dalai Lama of a Buriat Lamaist from Siberia. Czarist political intrigue in Tibet was real enough, but it did not, and could not, justify the invasion. Actually, the aggressive British move had been long prepared. Lord Curzon, the arch-expansionist viceroy of India, had been trying for years to separate Tibet from China by entering into official relations with the Tibetan local authorities. When the latter returned all his letters, on the ground that foreign affairs could only be handled through Beijing, Curzon declared that

their action did not accord "with proximity to the territories of a great civilized power."

What such proximity and such civilization meant was shown to the Tibetans in 1904. An expedition was sent against them under the command of Francis Younghusband, whom we have already encountered as a border spy in China's Xinjiang. In March, hundreds of Tibetan troops who had been lured out of their defense works, ostensibly to parley, were treacherously massacred at a place called Guru. What other way was there to deal with the Tibetans, wrote a British correspondent unashamed of Empire-building logic, since "there was no hope of their regarding the British as a formidable power, and a force to be reckoned with, until we had killed several thousand of their men."*

The Tibetans, as we know from contemporary sources, were pretty clear about what they were fighting against. For over a hundred years, they had watched the conquest and enslavement of neighboring India by British colonialism. Their own region, they were determined, should not share a similar fate. This was the source of the "fanatical courage" which amazed the invaders. The city of Gyantse, for instance, fell only after an artillery bombardment had battered down what the British themselves described as an incredibly gallant defense by the primitively-armed local forces. Afterwards, Younghusband led his band to Lhasa. There he dictated an "agreement" by which the Tibetans were forced to pledge payment of the costs of the campaign of slaughter waged against them; sanction the occupation of the strategic Chumbi Valley until the money was handed over; give "free right of access" to the region to British traders and officials; "raze all forts and fortifications and remove all armaments" between the frontier and Lhasa; and at the same time to close the region to the representatives and investment of all other foreign powers except "by previous consent of the British government."

The Tibetans acceded reluctantly and with bitterness. Their pain and anger was augmented by the fact that, while they had fought bravely for their

* Candler, Edmund, *The Unveiling of Lhasa*, London, 1905.

region and for the sovereign rights of China, the Qing dynasty government at Beijing — which should have been responsible for the defense of the whole country — had skulked and done nothing to help. That was hardly surprising. The dynasty both feared and relied upon the imperialists. It had surrendered not only many important places inhabited by the majority Han nationality but even parts of its own ancestral territories in Manchuria. And in 1900 it had flinched from making a hard fight for its very capital, Beijing. To Beijing itself it had given “free access”; it was for that purpose that the “Boxer Protocol” had specified foreign garrisoning of the railway from the sea and the razing of coast-defense forts. Nothing was plainer than that the invasion of Tibet, at the other end of the country, was part of the imperialist assault on China as a whole.

Equally, the courageous anti-British resistance of the local troops and the people of Tibet in 1904 was part of the anti-imperialist struggle of all nationalities of China for their common homeland, in contrast to the treason of the feudal monarchy. *

In the meantime, the deals between the imperialists, like the rivalries among them, proceeded at the expense of China and other countries which they had

* The fact that the Tibetans had consciously fought against the power they saw occupying and oppressing India made it all the more illogical, over half a century later, for the government of India to base its own pretensions with regard to Tibet on the predatory document imposed by Younghusband's cannon. Just the same it did so and argued, in connection with the Sino-Indian dispute after 1959, that “the 1904 Convention between the Indian (*sic.*) and Tibetan Governments” proved that Tibet had treaty-making powers, and that, hence, with regard to British encroachments on the border “non-adherence of the Chinese government was irrelevant.” (Report of Indian officials, pp. 111-113 in *Report of the Officials of the Governments of India and China on the Boundary*, Delhi, 1961.) This despite the fact that there was no Indian government, properly speaking, in 1904 at all but only the British overlordship that had devoured all of India and wanted to eat away at China as well. And despite the fact that Prime Minister Nehru himself had described the Younghusband affair as “imperialist intervention” and said of it, “They sat down there and imposed the British Government's will.... All kinds of extra-territorial privileges were imposed on Tibet.” (Nehru's own speech in the Lok Sabha, Delhi, March 30, 1959.) China, understandably, could not consent to an argument which not only based border claims on former British empire outreach but also required, in essence, that socialist China accept the alienation of Tibet — which not even the old feudal Chinese governments had done.

marked as their prey.

The Anglo-Japanese alliance, when it was renewed in 1905, was rephrased as a frank mutual insurance pact for the past and future robberies of the contracting powers on an Asia-wide scale. One of its stated objects was "the maintenance of territorial rights of the High Contracting Parties in the regions of Eastern Asia and India." The revised text gave Japan the right to "guidance, control and protection of Korea," paving the way to the destruction of the Korean state. Britain was to be supported in similar encroachments "in the proximity" of the Indian frontier (i. e. Tibet and any other part of Southwest China that could come under this broad definition).

Britain then forced a pact on China in 1906 reiterating most of the conditions Younghusband had imposed on the Tibetans at bayonet-point in 1904, and extorting the further privilege of operating telegraph lines in Tibet. This was a new piece of larceny but it also showed that the London government had failed in its attempt to wrest Tibet from China's jurisdiction and still had to negotiate with Beijing on matters affecting the region. The second step, taken in 1907, was a compromise deal Britain succeeded in making with Czarist Russia in which her inroads, as defined by the 1906 pact, were recognized by Russia but both powers piously pledged respect for "China's suzerain rights" and "the territorial integrity of Tibet." For Britain, the arrangement was part of a general effort to allay her sharp Asian rivalries with Czarist Russia (the 1907 agreements dealt also with Afghanistan and Persia).^{*} Its purpose was to draw Russia, with France, into an alliance against the rising power of Germany. The imperialist line-up for World War I was taking shape.

The United States, too, had egged Japan on. It had calculated that, hav-

^{*} Russia's Czar Nicholas II was "dreaming also of bringing Tibet under his dominion," wrote Russian War Minister Kuropatkin in his diary on February 16, 1903 (reprinted in *Krasnyi Arkhiv*, Moscow, 1922, vol. 2, p. 31). But Russia was soon weakened by defeat at the hands of Japan in their war 1904-5. So in her 1907 trade-off treaty with Britain she undertook to leave Tibet open to British penetration in return for similar facilities elsewhere. "As the British proposal apparently amounted to converting Tibet into Britain's virtual protectorate," the Czarist Foreign Ministry wrote in its secret papers thrown open after the October Revolution, "we should ask for compensation either in Afghanistan or Persia."

ing spent her blood and limited treasure in military efforts, Japan would be able to provide only the police power in her new Manchurian and Korean holdings. This would leave American capital to make the investments and harvest a lion's share of the gains. Japan's war on Russia was financed partly by loans from a Wall Street banking syndicate. The subsequent peace treaty, giving Japan more than she could have held by arms if the war had gone on, was sponsored by President Theodore Roosevelt. Meanwhile, after a grab in Latin America, he was building the Panama Canal to bring U.S. naval power to the Pacific to compete with that of other imperialist contenders for Asia. (Interestingly, as was noted at the time, the U. S.-garrisoned Panama Canal Zone was modeled on the Czarist-Russian-garrisoned Chinese Eastern Railway Zone in Northeast China. Imperialist governments, including rival ones, borrow "good ideas" from each other.)

Later, in 1908, the Root-Takahira Agreement between the Washington and Tokyo governments invited Japan to do what she liked in Northeast China (Manchuria) and Korea. In return, Japan agreed not to disturb the U.S. colonial hold on the Philippines. It was so arrant a betrayal of Korea, a country whose independence the U.S. had pledged itself to support in a previous treaty, that a Korean patriot in San Francisco assassinated M. D. W. Stevens, American adviser on foreign affairs to the Korean court, who had been engaged under Japanese pressure. The Root-Takahira Agreement, a typical slave-trading deal, paved the way directly for the outright Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910. In relation to that country a Korean commentator wrote bitterly, "the United States sneered at freedom and lent arms to the tyrant."*

Flowing out of the Root-Takahira Agreement was an ambitious Wall Street scheme to buy out both the Czarist Russian and the Japanese railways in Manchuria and make them a link in an American-owned "round-the-world railway." The man who devised the scheme was the U.S. rail tycoon E.H. Harriman.** Its financial bankers were the Morgan interests and Kuhn, Loeb

* Chung, Henry, *The Oriental Policy of the United States*, New York, 1919, p.40.

** E.H. Harriman was the father of Averell Harriman, the banker's heir who from 1961 was Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs in the administration of President John F. Kennedy.

& Co. (the National City Bank and First National Bank of New York). Its chief promoter in Washington was Willard Straight who, says a U.S. historian, was "the link between the State Department and the bankers who were to become the official promoters of its policy in Eastern Asia. As acting chief of the Far Eastern Division he (Straight) worked for Harriman, and as Harriman's representative he worked for the Department of State."* When the purchase scheme failed, this combination turned its attention to the building of parallel lines to squeeze out both the Russians and the Japanese. U.S. Secretary of State Knox blessed their efforts with the statement that,

The nations that finance the Chinese railways will be foremost in the affairs of China, and the participation of American capital in these investments will give the voice of the United States more authority in political controversies in that country....

This frankness was accompanied by the ritualistic expressions of concern for "the administrative entity" of China. At the same time, strong pressure was applied at the highest level by the U.S. President William H. Taft who telegraphed Prince Chun, the Qing dynasty's Foreign Minister: "I have an intense personal interest in making use of American capital in the development of China." Owing to the revolutionary upheavals that shook China soon afterwards, however, all these profit-making schemes bore little fruit.

As it turned out, U.S. manoeuvres at this time, no less than those of Britain, facilitated the seizure of continental positions by Japan. It was on these positions that Japanese imperialism was to lean in its all-out effort to conquer all China from 1937 onward, and the whole Pacific, including U.S. and British possessions, in 1941-45.

Another pact for the mutual insurance of colonial spoils was signed between France and Japan. It was intended to bolster Japanese colonial control in Korea, and French colonial control in Indo-China. This pact too af-

* Griswold, A. Whitney, *The Far Eastern Policy of the United States*, pp. 141-144 and p. 161.

firmed the "right" of both these imperialist powers to interfere in the parts of China adjacent to their respective colonies, and therefore marked for subsequent absorption, by one or the other. The brazen theory that "proximity" gave the right to encroach could of course be applied endlessly, until nothing was left of the victim.

Inside China, during the same decade, the rapid political changes were conditioned by the social shifts which we have described, the unrelenting pressure of imperialism, and the first revolutionary armed struggle of the European working class after the beginning of the imperialist era, the Russian Revolution of 1905-07. That revolution demonstrated the internal weakness of one of the most outwardly imposing of the imperialist powers, the Czarist monarchy. It took place at the same time that the Czarist government sustained the first modern military defeat of a European state by an Asian one, in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. The effect was to stimulate all national movements in colonial and semi-colonial Asia and to help them draw up programs for struggle against internal despotism as well.

After 1905, the day of revolts and peasant wars of the traditional type was over in Asia. They gave place to bourgeois-type revolutions, in Iran, in Turkey and in China.

But even earlier, following the signing of the "Boxer Protocol," the thoroughly discredited Qing dynasty court had returned to Beijing from its refuge in Northwest China, to find a changed situation. The chief challenge to its power no longer came from reformers, who wanted a limit to despotism. Instead, it faced revolutionists who wanted to wipe it out.

This was dramatically shown by the bad fright that the Empress Dowager and her entourage had along the way. They barely escaped having a temporary stopping place on their homeward journey burned over their heads, by a peasant secret society — the Ge Lao Hui or Elder Brothers which had formed links with Sun Yat-sen and his group. The empress thereupon altered her mode of travel from the traditional horse-and-palanquin caravan to the safety of a foreign-built railway. And on reaching blood-soaked and ravaged Beijing, as was noted by the British press, "whenever she caught sight of a

foreign face, she drew back the curtains of her yellow sedan — and bowed, smiled and nodded.”

The change was symbolic. Thenceforth, this arch-reactionary potentate became a “westernizer.” She issued a set of decrees which reproduced much of the program of the 1898 reformers whom she herself had ordered to be executed or exiled. In this way she tried to give the dynasty a new lease of life, and her “reforms” were very much to the taste of western finance capital. The archaic institutions of the past had proved unsuitable for keeping the masses of the people in check. Nor were they a convenient way of running a country to be colonized by investments in railroads, telegraphs and industry.

But it was too late for such palliative plasters. The cream of China’s educated youth were forming secret societies, founding underground newspapers and undertaking anti-dynastic actions of various kinds. While the imperial officials struggled by both suppression and demagogy to head off the revolutionary wave within the country, Sun Yat-sen from his exile was organizing with indefatigable energy. He travelled to all parts of the world where Chinese communities had formed and young men and women from China studied in the universities, gathering funds, hammering out a program, setting up clubs and newspapers, buying and shipping arms. He and his followers directed students who were going home into various forms of underground work, including penetration of the administration and army. Despite arrests and executions, these tasks were courageously performed.

Soon the underground stream was reflected on the surface. In 1904, local revolutionaries led by Huang Xing, who was to become one of Sun Yat-sen’s closest co-workers, took steps to organize a big peasant revolt in Hunan province. In the same year, the national bourgeoisie of China launched a highly effective boycott of American goods to protest the brutal racial discrimination against Chinese on the West Coast of the United States.* In 1905,

* Many facts regarding the causes and course of the boycott are brought together in *The Chinese Abroad* (Shanghai, 1927) by the American professor Harley F. McNair. McNair enumerates massacres, beatings, arrests, deportations, racial legislation against “Mongolians,” and even the suicide, in 1903, of a Chinese military attaché who could not bear the humiliations to which he was subjected by the San Francisco police.

a bomb was thrown at an imperial commission sent abroad to study foreign constitutions.

It is of great importance that Sun Yat-sen, in Tokyo in August 1905, achieved the merger of the Revive China Society with other revolutionary groups into the Tong Meng Hui (Revolutionary League). Thus, most of the revolutionary organizations of China, which were hitherto small and scattered, were first united in a real party.

Among other things, the Tong Meng Hui reflected, in some of its approaches and ideas, the wide echo in Asia of the Russian Revolution of 1905, even though the latter did not win success. Its organ *Min Bao* (The People's Paper) printed articles on the Russian movement in almost every issue. The attention of progressive Chinese, hitherto fixed on the American and French revolutions of the eighteenth century, was now attracted to this great upheaval of their own times, which they watched with keen interest, sympathy and admiration. "The Russian revolution surpasses those of all other countries," one author stated. "Though the countries of Europe and America are powerful, their peoples are poor." His conclusion was that it was necessary "to begin, at the same time, a political and an economic revolution." From the example of the Russians in 1905, the Chinese revolutionaries gained a new idea of the importance of the press as a means of spreading their principles, of armed struggle and mass organization as effective methods, and of the political importance of the land question.

The Tong Meng Hui program called not only for a Republic but for equalization for land ownership, in order to free the peasants from the landlord yoke. This was seen as a measure to prevent capitalism and its abuses from growing in China — thus paving the way for socialism. In fact, however, its realization, in the circumstances of that time, would inevitably have given rise to capitalist property relations in the countryside and the general growth of capitalism in China. Thus, while the program was definitely revolutionary in relation to the whole feudal system, the socialist label put on it was illusory (it took no account of the role of the working class and Lenin compared it with "Narodism" in old Russia). The working class in China was still very small and

without its political party, so this was inevitable at the time.

In fact the Tong Meng Hui program was one of bourgeois-democratic revolution. Even in this respect, it was incomplete and had many weaknesses. It made Manchu absolutism its target, but ignored the link of foreign imperialism with the whole of feudal reaction in China. Nonetheless, particularly in the context of its insistence on revolutionary methods as distinct from all ideas of "reforming" the dynasty, the ideas it embodied represented the most advanced political thought of China at the time. Of all the programs then put forward to save China, it was the closest to the real situation and to the demands of the people. On this basis, the membership of the League grew to over 10,000 within a year.

In 1906, under Tong Meng Hui leadership, coal miners in Jiangxi province rose in a revolt which was joined by the peasants and mustered a force of 30,000 before it was suppressed. In 1907, the League organized a mutiny among soldiers in Hankou whose pay was in arrears and an anti-tax revolt among the peasants in Guangdong province. In 1908, at a time when Sun Yat-sen was making his headquarters in Hanoi, armed Tong Meng Hui groups penetrated into China from Vietnam. Although finally forced to withdraw, they recrossed the frontier in greater strength than they had entered, reinforced by many soldiers of the dynastic army who had come over to the revolutionary side.

In the meantime, the Kang Youwei reform group, which was still in exile, took fright at the revolutionary tide and re-emerged as the "Baohuangdang" (Defend-the-Emperor Party). It is of interest to note that the reformers too paid the closest attention to the 1905 Russian revolution. But they did so, as their paper the *Shi Bao* wrote at the time, only for the purpose of urging the Qing monarchy, like its Czarist counterpart, to hurry with some sort of constitution to avert a situation in which "ill-intentioned persons may make use of the popular anger to raise a revolt." History, however, had moved far beyond Kang Youwei and his fellow leaders. The revelation of their true outlook only increased the ranks of the revolution.

In 1909, the imperial court, again resorting to reform manoeuvres to save its skin, sanctioned the formation of provincial consultative assemblies — a

step supposed to prepare for a later national parliament. The assemblies did not satisfy anyone, nor did they serve the monarchy in the way intended. Though these legal organs were dominated by non-revolutionary local gentry, the Tong Meng Hui was able to make some use of them. Two years afterwards, against a background of natural calamities, famine and mounting agrarian discontent which grew into revolts in practically every province, they came into sharp collision with the dynasty on the question of the penetration of foreign capital into China.

Railways were an immediate issue. From 1905 on, simultaneously with foreign-financed railway development, various companies and corporations had been organized by Chinese capitalists, and part of the local landlords, to build lines on their own account. Early in 1911, the dynasty, under direct pressure from President Taft of the United States, accepted a £6 million loan from a consortium of American, British, French and German bankers. It announced the "nationalization" of private railway-building rights in Central-South and Southwest China, intending to mortgage these to the foreign banks. The shareholders of the projected Chengdu-Chongqing railway in Sichuan province organized a protest deputation. The imperial viceroy placed them under arrest, then ordered troops to fire on the people of Chengdu, the provincial capital, who came to demand their release.

The townspeople, reinforced by peasants who had suffered from floods in the province, rose in a revolt that lasted several months. During its course, they captured and beheaded the tyrannical viceroy. It is of no little interest to note that one of the leaders of the railway rising in Sichuan, Zhang Lan, was to become a vice-chairman of the Central People's Government of China as a united front figure on its establishment in 1949. (Zhang Lan died in 1955.) As for the Chengdu-Chongqing rail line over which the controversy arose, it actually came into being only after the liberation. It was finally built in 1950-52, neither by foreign companies nor by local gentry and capitalists who had talked about it for four decades — but as one of the first acts of the people's democratic state led by the working class.

IX

THE MONARCHY OVERTHROWN

(1911)

On October 10, 1911, a decisive event took place. Headed by secret members of the Tong Meng Hui, the imperial garrison at Wuchang, just across the Yangtze from Hankou, the key industrial and commercial city of Central China, rose in revolt and issued a manifesto calling for the overthrow of the Manchu (Qing) dynasty. With the help of the workers and students, it gained possession of China's largest arsenal, in neighboring Hanyang, where tremendous supplies of weapons were stored.

The Qing dynasty navy, which was ordered to sail up to Hankou to suppress the rising, cast anchor there but declined to fire on the revolutionists. Within thirty days, the writ of the dynasty, which had so recently seemed all-powerful within the country, ceased to run in all China south of the Yangtze. It also lost all authority in a number of northern cities including Shenyang (Mukden), the capital of the dynasty's own ancestral fief of Manchuria.

The strong-minded Empress Dowager had by this time died. So had the imprisoned "reformist" Emperor Guangxu, probably done away with on the orders of his blood-thirsty aunt as she felt her own end coming. Pu Yi, an infant surrounded by nonentities, was on the throne.

The foreign powers, and the landlords and compradores of China, now saw that the monarchy was probably beyond saving. They therefore looked for a "man on horseback" who could either crush the revolution or divert it

before it abolished their privileges. Such a man, in their eyes, was Yuan Shikai, an overwhelmingly ambitious army general of the “modern” official clique who had pretended to side with the reformers of 1898, only to betray them.

Appointed commander-in-chief of the imperial forces, and then made premier, Yuan gained control of North China, where the revolution had no armed strength. Then he opened negotiations with the republican South. He was backed in this by a note from the foreign powers threatening intervention in thinly veiled terms if a “peaceful” settlement was not reached. And wavering bourgeois elements in the southern camp, terrified lest a revolutionary civil war unleash the forces of agrarian revolt, also played into his hands.

It was after a truce between the two forces had been reached that the revolutionary standard-bearer Sun Yat-sen made a triumphal return to China, from which he had been exiled for almost twenty years. On February 1, 1912, Sun was proclaimed Provisional President of the Republic of China in Nanjing, the old capital of the Taipings. His declarations in this capacity were strong on one point. They left no loophole for the survival of the monarchy, in constitutional or any other guise. But they also had a fatal weakness. They made no mention of that other key principle of the Tong Meng Hui, the equalization of landownership.

It was this failure by the revolutionaries to build a firm base in the vast peasantry that enabled the northern reactionaries to subvert the new Republic into a shield for the feudal order. Acting quickly, Yuan Shikai and his generals forced the Qing dynasty to abdicate and took over power in Beijing. The abdication decree, issued on behalf of the three-year-old emperor, ordered Yuan Shikai, till that movement the imperial premier, to “unite the North and South.” Ignoring the fact of an existing republican administration in Nanjing, it further empowered him to “organize a provisional republican government.” It also confirmed an agreement reached with Yuan that the deposed emperor would retain “the respect due to a foreign sovereign,” a salary equal to some U.S. \$2 million a year, all imperial private property including the palaces, and his retinue and personal armed bodyguard at state expense. The Manchu aristocracy too was to keep its personal property and titles, and be

given exemption from military service. For aristocrats who had already squandered, or in the future might squander, the wealth they had squeezed from the people, there was the provision that "impoverished princes and dukes shall be provided with means of livelihood"!

Two days later, on February 14, 1912, Sun Yat-sen, whose title as Provisional President was granted him by the revolution, resigned in favor of Yuan Shikai, whom the abdicating feudal dynasty itself had appointed as its successor. This disastrous result came about because Sun and his party had let the leadership even in the South slip into the hands of last-minute "adherents to the revolution" who were really constitutional monarchists, and because they neither mobilized the people on the crucial question of land, nor organized revolutionary armed forces. The reasons in Sun's own mind were that he wanted to avoid civil war and foreign intervention, bring all groups under the Republic, and secure international recognition and foreign loans for the economic undertakings of the new state. These loans, imperialist powers had indicated, would be withheld unless Yuan became President.

To the honestly confused Sun, the achievement of the Republic, which he had so long wished and fought for, seemed more important than anything else and worth every compromise. Later he was to regret his act bitterly. It brought neither unity, nor peace, nor the "orderly progress" for which Sun Yat-sen had hoped.

On March 10, 1912, the constitution of the new Republic was proclaimed in Nanjing. It contained property qualifications for the vote which deprived the majority of the people of the suffrage. And by the summer of the same year the peasants, who had expected a better life from the revolution, were being shot down by Yuan's troops. Though under the republican flag, these troops enforced the collection of feudal rents and exorbitant taxes no less savagely than when they had flown the dragon banner of the Manchus.

For the Chinese people, the whole experience was a rehearsal and a school. It taught them, once and for all, that a revolution is not won by merely changing the form of government. Among those who were to remember this lesson was Sun Yat-sen himself. Many other participants in the events of 1911-12,

after the October Revolution in Russia imbued them with new ideas, were to become leaders of the Chinese Communist Party which formed an alliance with Sun Yat-sen.

Zhu De, an officer who was among those who raised the standard of anti-dynastic revolt in Yunnan province, was to become commander-in-chief of the People's Liberation Army that drove the last imperialist-armed reactionary troops off the mainland of China 38 years later. Dong Biwu, a revolutionary working in Hankou at the time of the rising, was to become a vice-chairman of the People's Republic of China. Among the young students of Changsha, Hunan province, who joined the republican army to fight the monarchy, and who pondered over the subsequent events, was the 18-year-old Mao Zedong.

X

WARLORD REACTION AND NEW POPULAR FORCES (1912-1918)

After the founding of the Republic, the Tong Meng Hui headed by Sun Yat-sen ceased to exist. Some of its most influential members joined forces with a number of the new political parties then mushrooming, which had no revolutionary past, to form the Kuomintang. This was done over Sun's objections. It represented much more than a change of name. The Tong Meng Hui had been an organization for revolutionary action. The Kuomintang was a loose body diluted by an influx of time-servers, who wanted to keep things as they were behind a revolutionary "front." After Yuan Shikai's usurpation, the Kuomintang became the opposition party in the parliament. Though it talked vaguely of "social service" and even "socialism," its program, unlike that of the Tong Meng Hui, made no reference to the pressing problem of agrarian reform. From the first, the new party showed a tendency to degenerate into a group of politicians lacking both fire and principle.

Sun Yat-sen soon became alarmed at the way things were going. So he approved the formation of a smaller body within the Kuomintang, the Tong Meng Hui Club. This sought unsuccessfully to preserve the revolutionary spirit, as well as the name, of the old League.

In the meantime Yuan was energetically building a military dictatorship. Soon he no longer needed the constitutional mask. Ignoring all democratic procedure, he negotiated with international bankers' groups for the same type

of loans that had evoked such a strong popular reaction against the dynasty. Opponents of his high-handed actions were silenced by the assassin's bullet.

The Kuomintang gained its ambition, a majority of seats in the first parliament. But its hopes of office were shattered when Yuan's thugs killed Song Jiaoren, its candidate for premier, who had believed in and sown the illusion of a parliamentary road to power. It was only after this demonstration of gangsterism that British, French, German, Russian and Japanese banks, satisfied that Yuan had declared war on the revolution, made a £25 million loan to his new government. The American press particularly was full of praise for Yuan as the "strong man" in the situation.

For his foreign support, the "strong man" was to be made to pay. An earnest of things to come was the "agreement" reached on January 27, 1912, in the first month of Yuan's presidency, by which the Kailuan Mining Administration was set up. By its terms, the British-owned Kaiping colliery, stolen from China through the instrumentality of Herbert Hoover in 1900, became the controlling partner in a merge with a Chinese enterprise, the Luanzhou Mining Co., thus gaining sway over the whole of the country's greatest operating coal area (situated with its center at Tangshan between Tianjin and the Great Wall). National sovereignty was openly flouted in the provision that the Kailuan concern was not to be subject to Chinese mining regulations unless the British government first approved, and in the restrictions placed on China's right to tax the enterprise. The actual running of affairs was vested in the British Chief Manager. As a bribe the highly-paid but powerless job of "Director-General" was created and given to President Yuan Shikai's eldest son.

While Britain was paid in coal, the United States was given a lien on China's oil. The Standard Oil Company of New York received the privilege of exploiting the petroleum deposits in Shaanxi province and monopoly exploration rights throughout northern China.

Territorially, too, a price was to be charged. The internal struggle in China prompted the imperialists to discard their normal pledges of non-encroachment, and a new scramble began — for her extensive minority regions. The flag of the new Republic reflected the historic multi-national character of the Chinese

state. Its five stripes, equal in width, symbolized the main national groups: the Hans, Manchus, Mongolians, Muslims (Huis and Uighurs) and Tibetans. But Yuan Shikai, a representative of the feudal landlord and merchant classes of old China, was interested only in exploiting and oppressing the majority and the minorities alike. By comparison with the old dynasty, he intensified both class oppression and national inequality. At the same time, he was no more energetic than the dynasty had been in defending the common heritage, the country. To curry favor with the foreign powers he confirmed and guaranteed all the unequal treaties and arrangements they had formerly imposed, including the "spheres of influence" along the frontiers — Britain's in Tibet, Czarist Russia's in Mongolia, etc. All this gave rise both to splitting tendencies and to intensified intrigues by the imperialists to use these tendencies to turn their "spheres of influence" into outright possessions or client states. For example, the pro-British section of the Tibetan aristocracy declared a sham "independence" which in practice was a variety of British protectorate and to which neither China nor any other country ever gave formal countenance.

On August 17, 1912, the British Minister in Beijing handed to the Chinese government a memorandum threatening non-recognition of the new Republic of China if it should send garrisons or administrators into Tibet or give it parliamentary representation. Britain, the document declared arrogantly, conceded Chinese "suzerainty" there but not Chinese sovereignty. And she insisted that a special conference be held on the Tibetan issue. Pending this, she would block all transit of goods and personnel between Tibet and the rest of China by way of India.* Yuan Shikai's government protested weakly that the step was virtually an act of war by "friendly" Britain, but nonetheless agreed to talk. Such was the origin of the notorious Simla Conference of 1913-14 and of the plot there not only to tear Tibet from China but to annex to

* The method of taking advantage of Tibet's difficult communications to obstruct quick contact with the rest of China was once more to appear in 1950, soon after China's liberation, when delays in India and non-granting of visa through the British colony of Hongkong prevented a delegation from Lhasa from coming, for several months, to Beijing. Reference to this was made in the Chinese note to India dated November 16, 1950.

Britain's Indian domain a large chunk of southeastern Tibet.

At Simla, the British representative, Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, * demanded the creation and delimitation of an "Outer Tibet" which was to be made virtually a separate entity and an "Inner Tibet" (comprising parts of Chinese provinces inhabited by Tibetans as well as other nationalities) where China would have administrative rights. Great pressure to bring this about was applied in the talks themselves, as well as directly on the Beijing government to which the British Minister declared that "The patience of His Majesty's Government is exhausted and... unless the Convention is signed... H.M.G. will hold themselves free to sign separately with Tibet." But even the Beijing regime of Yuan Shikai, subservient as it was to imperialism, refused to ratify the Convention dictated by Britain at Simla. Instead, on July 3 and 7, it declared both at the conference and through its Minister in London, that it rejected the Convention and the validity of any and all separate arrangements Britain might sign with anyone in Tibet.

These actions were important. For as early as March 1914, McMahon had induced Lonchen Shatra, a representative of the Tibetan local administration, to sign at Delhi, secretly and apart from the official negotiations, a map which placed several counties of southeastern Tibet within the British empire in India. Not only was this plot hatched privily from the Chinese government but Shatra's action was condemned and repudiated in Lhasa, which continued to collect taxes and perform other administrative functions in the counties concerned. Hence the British did not publish the McMahon-Shatra correspondence until 15 years afterwards, in 1929. And they did not venture to put the "McMahon line" as a border on an official map until 1936, when China was again in extreme difficulties, on the eve of the Japanese invasion. The Chiang Kai-shek government of that time, however, also did not recog-

* This was the same McMahon who as High Commissioner of Egypt, when it was a British protectorate, pledged that the Arab countries would have independence in return for support given to the Allies against Germany and Turkey in World War I. After the war, as the British representative on the Middle East commission of the Paris Peace Conference, he helped carve up the Arab lands into "protectorates" and "mandates" for the victorious Allies.

nize the line, which thereupon again disappeared for some years, even from many British Indian maps.

Neither the Simla Convention nor the McMahon line, therefore, ever had any validity or legality. Both were parts of the unsuccessful and closely interlinked attempts of British colonialism permanently to separate Tibet from China as their protectorate, and to steal territory from the Tibetans themselves for direct colonial control. *

In 1913, Yuan Shikai's weak-kneed policy toward the imperialists, as well as his betrayal of the people at home, brought about the "Second Revolution" led by Sun Yat-sen. It was a military uprising by some of the armies in China's southern provinces and was suppressed after several months of fighting. The bitter dissatisfaction shown by the outbreak undoubtedly made Yuan more careful for a time in his surrenders to the foreign powers. The reason the revolutionaries failed to topple the dictator was that they again made no agrarian demands, so that the peasantry kept aloof.

Having won militarily, Yuan outlawed the Kuomintang throughout the country. At the same time he got rid of the Parliament. On the prompting of his legal adviser, the American professor Frank Goodnow, he then extended his presidential powers in the so-called Constitutional Pact. Sun Yat-sen was forced back into exile. In Japan, in the beginning of 1914, he founded a new, compact and more strictly disciplined political organization known as the Zhonghua Gemingdang (Chinese Revolutionary Party) to prepare once more for Yuan's overthrow.

The outbreak of the First World War, in August 1914, set in train a new set of events. The Japanese joined the Allied powers. Their only battle with the Germans, however, was on Chinese soil, in Shandong province, where they forced the capitulation of the Kaiser's garrison and naval forces based on Jiaozhou (Qingdao). Having thus introduced her troops into politically-di-

* For carefully researched account of the "Simla Convention" including the attempt to "legitimize" it by an edition of Aitchison's *Treaties* deliberately falsified for the purpose as late as 1936, see Neville Maxwell, *India's China War*, London (1970), and New York (1971-1972), chapter II.

vided China, Japan was in a position to act without restraint by rival imperialist powers. All the latter, except the United States, were engaged in the life-and-death struggle in Europe. For Tokyo now, it was no longer a question of a share in the partition of China. Japan saw the chance of making all China her own colony.

That, indeed, was the reason Japan had entered the war against Germany at all. The Japanese militarist Black Dragon Society explained this in a memorandum issued in 1915:

When the European War is terminated and peace restored, we are not concerned so much with the question whether it be the Dual Monarchies (Germany, Austria) or the Triple Entente (Britain, Russia, France) which emerge victorious, but whether, in anticipation of the future expansion of European influence in the Continents of Europe and Asia, the Imperial Japanese Government should or should not hesitate to employ force to check the movement before this occurrence. Now is the most opportune time for Japan to quickly solve the Chinese question. Such an opportunity will not occur again for hundreds of years.*

The most ambitious attempt to seize this opportunity was made early in 1915. On January 18, the Japanese ambassador, in a dramatically-staged secret night visit to Yuan Shikai, served China with the infamous "Twenty-one Demands." This thuggish document, which was plainly reminiscent of the conditions Japan had forced on Korea preliminary to her annexation, was written on paper suggestively watermarked with drawings of cannon and warships.

The demands themselves consisted of five groups, with the following main features:

I. The Chinese government to consent to all Japanese acquisitions in

* McNair, H.F., *Modern Chinese History, Selected Readings*, Shanghai, 1927, translated the entire text of the memorandum (pp. 759-766).

Shandong province that might be embodied in a future peace treaty with Germany. Japan to be given, at once, new railway rights in Shandong outside the former German sphere.

II. Japan to enjoy the former Russian leasehold of Dalian (Dairen) and Lüshun ("Port Arthur") and the South Manchuria railway, captured by her in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, for 99 years (i. e. until the years 1997 and 2002 respectively), and to receive leaseholds to several other Manchurian railways for the same period. South Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia to be opened wide to Japanese enterprise, Japan to have first claim on all mining, railway and loan rights, and all political, financial or military adviserships or instructorships open to foreigners in these regions.

III. China's largest heavy industrial enterprise, the Hanyeping Iron and Steel Works on the Yangtze river, to be made a joint Sino-Japanese concern, China to pledge not to dispose of any property of this enterprise or to permit anyone, Chinese or foreign, to open new mines in its vicinity without Japanese consent.

IV. China not to cede or lease any harbor, bay or island along her entire coast to any power other than Japan.

Group V was the most secret and shocking of all. It provided that China should employ Japanese political, financial and military advisers. It went so far as to lay down that "the police departments of important places (in China) shall be jointly administered by Japanese and Chinese." It required that a Japanese arsenal should be established in China, and that China should buy half of all her munitions from Japan. Japan, moreover, was to be granted various railway rights south of the Yangtze and first claim on any mines, railways or dockyards in Fujian province, opposite Taiwan (which twenty years before had been seized outright by Japan).

The Beijing government negotiated on these demands until May. Then a 48-hour Japanese ultimatum panicked it into acceptance. Yuan Shikai, instead of appealing to the national sentiment of the people, further strengthened the mechanisms of suppression. He also launched on a scheme to make himself

emperor. In this he was supported by the ever-busy American professor Goodnow, who had already played his learned part in the scrapping of what little was left of the democratic externals of the Republic.

Goodnow wrote a memorandum,* widely circulated in Chinese by Yuan Shikai, arguing for the restoration of the monarchy. It began with the insulting allegation that “in a country where the intelligence of the people is not high,” president could not succeed president without disorder. Then it went on to threaten:

European capital and European commercial and industrial enterprise... are more inclined to insist that conditions of peace shall be obtained in order that they may receive what they consider to be the proper returns on their investment.... This insistence they are more and more liable to carry to the point of actual destruction of the political independence of offending nations.

Therefore, Goodnow concluded, “Monarchy is better suited than a republic for China.”

His opinion was backed by Prof. Stanley K. Hornbeck, later a leading figure in the Far Eastern division of the U.S. State Department. In China, this professorial politician pontificated, “monarchical government fairly represents the political ideal of the people as a whole.” That Yuan Shikai should be the monarch, seemed self-evident to both Goodnow and Hornbeck. As the latter put it, “for 30 years the representatives of foreign countries... have felt and shown their confidence in him.”**

* All quotations from the Goodnow memorandum are based on McNair, H. F., *op. cit.*, which prints it on pp. 743-746. McNair points out that he had to re-translate from Chinese because Goodnow, when approached, said his original English text was “not available.”

** Hornbeck, Stanley K., *Contemporary Politics in the Far East*, New York, 1916.

Goodnow, however, made one reservation. His recommendations, he wrote, should only be carried out if "the change does not meet with such opposition... on the part of the Chinese people... as will lead to the recurrence of the disorders which the present Republican government has successfully put down." In other words, in the eyes of this eminent academic personage from the Republic which had once produced Washington and Lincoln, forms of government were secondary; counter-revolutionary efficiency primary.

Following Goodnow's advice, but disregarding his warning, Yuan Shikai engineered his own "election" as emperor. The enthronement was set for New Year's Day 1916. But a week before this date a military commander named Cai E, supported by other officers including Zhu De, then already a brigadier-general, rebelled in far-away Yunnan province. The dictator was so discredited, and the public distaste for the idea of monarchy was so great, that this event produced as spectacular a disintegration of the central power as the anti-Manchu Revolution of 1911. Yuan was compelled to postpone, and finally to cancel, his own accession to the crown. In June 1916 he died.*

Though the Beijing government lingered on as a figure-head, it never again enjoyed authority throughout the country. The nominal presidency, and control of the capital, began to alternate between two cliques of provincial feudal militarists into which Yuan's armed establishment had broken up. One was the Anhui province clique, backed by Japan. The other was the Zhili (Hebei) province clique, backed by the British and Americans. Somewhat later another pro-Japanese clique, the Manchurian or Fengtian clique, appeared as an additional contestant for nationwide sway. Such was the beginning of the "warlord era." Its inner content was that the different imperialist powers now contended for power through Chinese armed adventurers, whom they financed

* This, among other things, was history's joke on the learned Hornbeck. In the book quoted, he wrote of Cai E's revolt that it was "scarcely expected that the rebellion would make great headway." But by the time the volume was printed, both the monarchy and Yuan Shikai were stone dead. Yet Hornbeck's later career was in no way damaged by his reactionary myopia. In the 1930's, as a diplomat, he helped build up Chiang Kai-shek. And in the 1950's he plugged for Chiang on Taiwan and Syngman Rhee in Korea. Imperialism and reactionaries in the countries it seeks to control do not change. An irresistible attraction draws them together.

and equipped.

The first of these groups to gain possession of the Beijing government was the pro-Japanese Anhui clique, headed by Duan Qirui. It immediately contracted the enslaving "Nishihara loans" amounting to over 200 million yen from Japan. In August 1917, following the U.S. declaration of war against Germany, this clique also declared China a belligerent on the Allied side. Most Chinese held that this action had nothing to do with their country's real interests. It was clear that it would not even bring with it the recovery of leaseholds previously seized by Germany, since the "Twenty-one Demands" had resulted in the transfer of these rights to Japan, which had secured an agreement with Britain to the same effect. Entry into the war was initially opposed by the parliament of the Republic. A majority in its favor was obtained only by the bribery of some deputies and the brutal beating-up of others.

Sun Yat-sen, who had returned to China after the death of Yuan Shikai, protested that the only kind of war on which China would be justified in embarking would be one against all imperialist control. He backed his protest by establishing a government in Guangzhou which he proclaimed to be the only legal one. But this move was politically and organizationally unprepared. So the Guangzhou government did not last long.

China's formal belligerency led only to the arming of the Beijing forces against internal opposition. No troops were sent abroad to fight, largely because the European Allies were very averse to giving Chinese the experience of shooting at "white men," even if the latter belonged to the enemy. Some 200,000 peasants and city poor were, however, recruited into the "Chinese Labor Corps" under British command. They were assembled and shipped by those experienced purveyors of "coolie" contract slaves, the imperialist "Kailan Mining Administration" in the founding of which Herbert Hoover, the future U.S. President, had played so large a part. The men were driven unarmed, often into the hottest zones of fire in France, to dig trenches and bury corpses. All this showed that her nominal "allies" were willing to assign only one role to China, that of a menial servant in her masters' quarrel.

Behind the scenes, the war-enriched United States was already preparing to make a bid for dominance over all China after Germany had been disposed of. This was naturally not to the taste of Japan, which had the same ambition and had extended her own influence so tremendously while her rivals were occupied elsewhere. Britain, the strongest imperialist power in China up to 1914, was being crowded by both America and Japan and forced, to a degree, to maneuver between them.

Prior to the Armistice, however, the ripening conflict was not permitted to come to the surface. On the contrary, because Japan constantly blackmailed them by threatening to quit the war or change sides, Britain and America began by making concessions. Britain guaranteed to Japan not only Shandong but also some former German islands in the Pacific.* The United States, only two months after it had brought China into the war by hinting at support of her claims at the future peace table, also betrayed her without ceremony. In the cynical Lansing-Ishii Agreement of November 2, 1917 it signed its name to the proposition "that territorial propinquity creates special relations between countries" and that, consequently, "the United States recognizes that Japan has special interests in China, particularly in the part to which her possessions are contiguous." The Lansing-Ishii Agreement was directed not only at China but also at Russia, then in the throes of revolution. The parts of China in which America recognized Japan's "special interests" were those closest to the Russian border.

In 1918, Britain too renewed her pressure for ratification of the "Simla Convention" of 1914, i.e. the signing away of Tibet.

Thus, even with China as their "ally," the contending imperialists continued their policy of partition. This added to the humiliation and fury that had been accumulating in the breasts of Chinese patriots for nearly eighty years. At the same time the war brought important economic and social changes within China that led to new types of struggle.

* Islands of Micronesia, including the Marshalls, Carolines and Marianas (except Guam). After World War II they fell under U.S. control. Bikini and Eniwetok, sites of early U.S. nuclear explosion tests, lie in the Marshall chain.

On the one hand, the temporary relaxing of European political pressures on China favored Japanese expansion.

On the other, the relaxation of their economic pressure led to the most rapid development hitherto experienced by Chinese industry, and therefore of the Chinese capitalists and working class.

Although China did not get rid of her unfavorable trade balance even at this period, the excess of her imports over her exports fell from U.S. \$134 million in 1914 to U.S. \$22 million in 1919.

The number of spindles in Chinese-owned cotton mills grew from 651,676 in 1913 to 1,173,012 in 1919. There was a great rise too in the domestic milling of flour (in 1914 China imported some 15,000 tons of flour more than she sold abroad, but in 1918 she exported 15,000 tons more than she bought). At the outbreak of the war there were only 15 Chinese-owned banks; in 1919 there were 57.

Besides the new industrial establishments founded by Chinese capital, a number of factories were built by the Japanese. Previously existing capacity was also used more fully than ever before. Therefore the Chinese working class grew at a rate faster than either Chinese-owned industry or the productive equipment in Chinese and foreign-owned industry taken together. Between 1914 and 1919, it multiplied threefold, from about 1,000,000 workers to about 3,000,000. Nor should one ignore the hundreds of thousands of "coolies" who had been shipped abroad during the war. Some of them worked in and around factories and large numbers, particularly in Russia, soon came under the influence of revolutionary thought. After the October Revolution, in fact, whole regiments of such Chinese fought valiantly in the ranks of the Soviet Red Army against the Whiteguards and foreign interventionists. With its numbers so enlarged and its horizons broadened, the working class was bound to challenge its previous totally submerged position. Its struggle was bound to find political expression. This was a new fact of crucial importance.

Finally, it should be noted that the wartime expansion of Chinese national capitalism was very one-sided, being confined almost exclusively to light

industry. There was nothing comparable in basic industry (metals, engineering, mining). On the contrary, as has been mentioned, Japan had tightened her grip on the little that China had. The Chinese economy, in fact, did not advance out of semi-colonialism and toward real independence. The rising national bourgeoisie could not remain satisfied with such a situation.

An expression of all these development — including international and domestic shifts — was the unprecedented intellectual ferment in wartime China. The magazine *New Youth*, which began to appear in 1915, directed scathing criticism against the Confucian ethic, the patriarchal family system, all the social and philosophical superstructures of Chinese feudalism. A movement was launched for a “literary renaissance,” one aspect of which was insistence that ‘all writing be in *bai hua* or “plain language,” i.e. the spoken tongue. This was essential if new information and ideas were to be brought to the people. Hitherto all writing, even in newspapers, had been in classical Chinese which bears roughly the same relationship to ordinary Chinese speech as Latin does to modern Italian, so people without special education could not even understand it if read aloud, much less read it themselves. As part of the new movement, the great writer and national hero Lu Xun, and the novelist Mao Dun, who decades later would become Minister of Cultural Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, began their work as pioneers of a new revolutionary-democratic literature.

The university and secondary school students, whose numbers increased rapidly in these years, rejected all that was old and eagerly examined every new idea in China and the world. By 1917, there were no less than 300 student periodicals, the vast majority of them in “plain language.” Youth organizations and study circles sprang up in great profusion. Among them were the New People’s Study Society led by Mao Zedong in Hunan province and the “Awakening” Society in Tianjin, one of whose leaders was Zhou Enlai. Gradually, the movement of the new intellectuals developed a right and a left wing. The former insisted on confining itself to “non-political” cultural questions. The latter sought the key to the radical transformation of Chinese society in all fields, political, economic and cultural.

The changes in Chinese society and thought during and immediately after World War I were far deeper and more significant than all previous ones since the Opium War. They laid the foundation for revolutionary developments compared to which the Revolution of 1911, for all its great significance in getting rid of the monarchy which had lasted for over 2,000 years, was only a disturbance on the surface. National consciousness was high. All the newly developing forces wanted an end to the unequal treaties, which impaired China's sovereignty. They understood clearly that these treaties, if allowed to continue in force, would enable the victorious imperialists after the war to use their political and economic privileges to frustrate all progress in China.

The common demand for the abolition of China's subservient position forced even the warlord Beijing government to take a public stand on these matters. It was compelled to instruct its delegation to the Peace Conference in Paris to seek, on the basis of the right of national self-determination and similar liberal principles proclaimed in President Wilson's "Fourteen Points" and other Allied pronouncements, the restoration of China to an equal status among the nations. Specifically proposed were:

The abolition of foreign spheres of influence.

Withdrawal of foreign troops from China.

An end to extraterritorial rights for foreigners.

Return of all leased areas and concessions.

Restoration of China's customs rights so that she could put an end to the crippling 5 per cent tariff.

Cancellation of the Japanese "Twenty-one Demands" of 1915.

All these just claims were rejected. Instead, Article 156 of the Versailles Peace Treaty confirmed and legalized the Japanese seizure of Shandong. It was endorsed by the Big Four of the conference, President Wilson of the United States, Prime Minister Lloyd George of Britain, Premiers Clemenceau

and Orlando of France and Italy. Here is its brutal wording:

The territories around Kiaochow Bay, railroads, cables and mines of Shantung, and other privileges set forth in the Sino-German Treaty of March 1898, are to be ceded to Japan.

Germany's rights in railroads, main lines and spurs, properties, stations, buildings and other stationary properties and mines are to be taken over by Japan.

The cable from Tsingtao to Formosa are to be taken over unconditionally by Japan.

Such was the slap in the face administered to China at the end of the war which had been fought under the slogans of "self-determination of nations" and "making the world safe for democracy." Inside the country, it evoked a movement of unprecedented proportions. This brought all the new forces in China society into head-on conflict with all imperialisms and their Chinese agents.

XI

THE “MAY 4” MOVEMENT OF 1919: THE NEW DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION BEGINS

On May 4, 1919, the students of Beijing marched on the government buildings where, at that very moment, they found the ministers hobnobbing with Japanese diplomats. After the marchers were fired on by police, and a number of them arrested, a great wave of protest spread throughout the country. The student youth of China, unwilling to live in a semi-enslaved country as their fathers had done, rose everywhere. Even those being educated in Japan itself paraded in the streets of Tokyo, where cavalry were sent out against them. The national bourgeoisie launched boycotts and other actions. The workers in Shanghai, in the British-owned Kailuan mines and on the Beijing-Hankou railway, launched the first political strike in Chinese history. “Chinese Labor Corps” workers returning from indentured wartime service in Europe refused to set foot in Japan on their seaborne way home. “Overseas Chinese” worldwide joined the outcry.

Frightened by the tide of protest, the government, early in June, was compelled to order the release of the arrested students. These, as proud victors, refused to leave jail unless the responsible officials were dismissed, new demonstrations were specifically permitted and a public apology was made by the authorities. The government, seeking to sidetrack the nationwide indignation, sent police to beg the prisoners’ pardon and even provided automobiles to carry them when freed. On June 28, the ministers who were the target of the

demonstration resigned. China announced that she would not sign the Treaty of Versailles.

The "May 4" Movement was a climactic point of the Chinese revolution. It took place after, and was one of the results of, the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, which had changed the world by substituting working-class power for the rule of imperialism on one-sixth of the earth's surface. Chinese revolutionists now became thoroughly disillusioned with their previous ideal, western capitalist democracy. Not only had the nations that professed it engaged in the great imperialist slaughter of World War I; they had marked their triumph over monarchic Germany, Austria and Turkey by the most arrant and hypocritical betrayal China had yet experienced. If both monarchy and parliamentary republic were forms of government by which the people were endlessly cheated and bled, the Chinese asked themselves, what was the alternative? And where could allies be found?

As already pointed out, Marx and Lenin, those great working-class leaders and thinkers, had expressed warm sympathy and understanding for the previous struggles of the Chinese people. But the workers of the capitalist countries, at that time, had been in no position to offer help. Nor had the Chinese people known of these expressions of sympathy, or thought of the world's workers as allies against imperialist capital, the exploiter of both.

By 1919, however, things were different. Marxism-Leninism had a material embodiment on China's borders, in Soviet Russia in which the working class ruled. The Chinese people could judge it by the test of action.

This action was plain and unmistakable. While the victorious Allied powers were resuming their plots for China's enslavement, the Soviet government renounced unconditionally all privileges, previously enjoyed by Russian Czarism, on Chinese soil. It gave up freely such enslaving fruits of the unequal treaties as extraterritoriality, concessions, indemnities and the exaction of "most favored nation treatment."

Moreover, the Chinese people saw the working people of neighboring Russia not only throwing out "their own" imperialists but finding the strength within themselves to defeat the retaliatory armed intervention of the whole

imperialist world. The American, British, French and Japanese governments which had fought on one side in World War I, the Germans who had fought on the other, were both sending troops into Russia to try and crush the Soviets, and filling the air with verbal thunderbolts against Bolshevism. Even the war-lord Chinese government participated in the anti-Soviet intervention. Those patriotic Chinese who were really determined to achieve national independence and progress saw one thing clearly. If all their old enemies were ranged on one side, right and justice must lie on the other. Their real friends abroad, more and more of them concluded, were the workers and the working-class state.

Such was the first reflection in the political consciousness of the Chinese of the decisive historical fact noted, at that time, by Stalin: that the successful overthrow of landlord and capitalist rule in Russia had "created a new line of revolutions against world imperialism, extending from the proletarians of the West, through the Russian revolution, to the oppressed nations of the East."* The events following World War I showed the beginning of this process. Those following World War II were to take it much further.

To be sure, the revolutions of the colonial and semi-colonial East, in the post-World War I days, were still bourgeois-democratic in nature, not socialist. Their internal tasks were very different from the "classic" bourgeois revolutions of seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe. The pursuit of their aims inevitably brought them into conflict with imperialism, the world capitalism of the twentieth century. That capitalism had already suffered a defeat by socialist revolution in the former Russian empire, and was challenged by working-class socialist forces throughout Europe.

Thus the new revolutions were the allies of rising socialism. In these circumstances, they could not be led to victory by each colonial country's bourgeoisie. It was bound to waver even more than before in the grip of the contradiction between its national interests, which were opposed to those of imperialism, and its own class character, which made it fear its own working

* J. Stalin, *The International Character of the October Revolution*, 1918.

people. Such revolutions could now fulfill their anti-feudal and anti-imperialist tasks with complete thoroughness only with the politically organized working class leading the peasantry and the whole nation. And the result of such a victory could not be the establishment of capitalist domination. It could only be the transition to the next stage, the establishment of socialism.

This is the meaning of Mao Zedong's definition:

A change, however, occurred in China's bourgeois-democratic revolution after the outbreak of the first imperialist world war in 1914 and the founding of a socialist state on one-sixth of the globe as a result of the Russian October Revolution of 1917.

Before these events, the Chinese bourgeois-democratic revolution came within the old category of the bourgeois-democratic world revolution, of which it was a part.

Since these events, the Chinese bourgeois-democratic revolution has changed, it has come within the new category of bourgeois-democratic revolutions and, as far as the alignment of revolutionary forces is concerned, forms part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution.*

New leadership for the Chinese revolution now began to take shape. Patriotic intellectuals throughout the country turned to the study of Marxist ideas as a way to move China forward. It is of decisive historic significance that Marxism came to China not in the adulterated version of the old socialist parties and the trade unionism of the Second International but as revolutionary Marxism-Leninism, which had been effectively applied by the Russian Communists to throw imperialism out of their country. Mao Zedong wrote of this:

The salvoes of the October Revolution brought us Marxism-Leninism.

* "On New Democracy," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, English edition, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, Vol. II, 1965, p.343.

The October Revolution helped progressives in China, as throughout the world, to adopt the proletarian world outlook as the instrument for studying a nation's destiny and considering anew their own problem. Follow the path of the Russians — that was their conclusion. *

Though still few in number, Chinese Marxists had already played an important part in the "May 4" Movement. They had provided it with its key slogan, embodying new ideas, "Down with imperialism." This represented quite a different level of understanding from partial watchwords such as, "Down with the Versailles Treaty."

It was in the course of this movement, and soon after it, that the Marxists among the intellectuals began to differentiate themselves sharply from "middle of the road" liberals. The latter had played their part in the May 4 events, and particularly in the cultural revolt against feudal classicism. But they still pictured themselves as members of an elite that would replace the old scholar officials and use its modern (i. e. bourgeois) knowledge to lead and "save" the nation. Therefore, when the "backward and uneducated" working masses (i. e. the vast majority of the nation) began to take a hand in the struggle they became as frightened as the reactionary government itself. Their main representative was the U.S.-educated Prof. Hu Shi, a disciple of the pragmatist philosophers William James and John Dewey, and he soon began to beat a hasty retreat. He entreated the youth not to become interested in "isms," meaning Marxism, but to immerse themselves instead in "problems," meaning technical studies and bourgeois sociology.

So, beginning with the same resentment against China's weakness and undevelopment, the two groups of intellectuals came to quite different conclusions. Rightward-inclined liberals saw the self-assertion of the masses as a menace to their "enlightened progress." Hu Shi, indeed, denied even the existence of imperialism and feudal class power as enemies to be fought. The

* "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, English edition, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, Vol. IV, 1965, p.413.

only fight he propagated was between "antiquated" and "primitive" ideas and methods on the one hand, and "scientific" and "efficient" ones on the other. But to the Marxists, the ruling classes and power and property structure of the old society were the bar to China's progress of all kinds — including the economic, educational and scientific. And the masses were the main force, the only force capable of overthrowing them, and thus creating progress in all fields. So Prof. Li Dazhao, a Marxist, replied to Hu Shi that only the "ism" could provide the "basic solution" without which not one of China's "problems" could be solved.

The debate was of historic importance. For the intellectuals, it compelled a choice between two roads. One was to lend their knowledge to the oppressed, learn from their experience and feelings, and fight in their ranks in order to destroy the oppressors and build a new China. The other was to become a "loyal opposition" to the oppressors, begging jobs from them in order to have the opportunity to "do some good," leaving the nation and the masses in their old predicament. As Mao Zedong said later:

In the Chinese democratic revolutionary movement, it was the intellectuals who were the first to awaken... in the days of the May 4th Movement the intellectuals were more numerous and more politically conscious than in the days of the Revolution of 1911. But the intellectuals will accomplish nothing if they fail to integrate themselves with the workers and peasants. In the final analysis, the dividing line between revolutionary intellectuals and non-revolutionary or counter-revolutionary intellectuals is whether or not they are willing to integrate themselves with the workers and peasants and actually do so.*

History amply bore this out.

Hu Shi, despite his erudition and talents, spent the rest of his life flatter-

* "The May 4th Movement," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, English edition, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, Vol. II, 1965, p. 238

ing the U.S. and holding office under a series of reactionary Chinese regimes. The course of human events had long decided that for a country like China, fighting for national freedom and a forward path in the world-wide era of imperialism and of proletarian revolution to replace it with socialism, independent capitalist development was impossible. So anyone, however “modern-minded” who wanted only capitalism and rejected socialism, was bound to end as a stooge of imperialism and domestic reaction. Hu Shi finished as “President of the Academy of Sciences” of Chiang Kai-shek’s Taiwan regime, the last anachronistic remnant of the old semi-colonial, compradore rule in China.

Li Dazhao took the path of the revolution and became one of its early martyrs, dying on the gallows. Yet it was the road he advocated for China’s intellectuals, and the Communist Party which he helped found, that was finally to win the adherence of the great majority and lead to the defeat of imperialism and reaction and the founding of the People’s Republic of China. It was the true highroad to independence, strength and modern progress for the entire Chinese people.

XII

FOUNDING OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY: THE WORKING CLASS TAKES THE LEAD (1921-1923)

After “May 4” the number of Marxists increased rapidly. Communist groups were formed in Beijing (Li Dazhao and others), Shanghai, Hankou (Dong Biwu and others), Changsha (headed by Mao Zedong), in Jinan, Hangzhou and among Chinese studying abroad (as by Zhou Enlai and others including Deng Xiaoping in Paris).

In July 1921, from which its foundation is dated, the Communist Party of China held its First Congress in Shanghai. The formation of a party basing itself on the Chinese working class and its interests laid the basis for the transformation of the longstanding spontaneous or partially organized struggle of the Chinese people into conscious revolutionary struggles, guided by Marxist-Leninist analysis and foresight. It created the general staff of a leading class which had no stake at all in the past, but on the contrary, as in all countries, represented the future.

The lack of such leadership had caused the failure of all previous risings of the Chinese people, heroic and immense as they were. The Taipings and the Yi He Tuan “Boxers” had suffered the historical fate of all purely peasant wars. In 1911-12 the Chinese bourgeoisie had shown its weakness and inability to finish what it had begun. Now, at last, the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution in China stepped on the road which was to lead forward to success; though it was to take almost 30 years of tremendous battles by the whole

people to achieve it.

In the meantime, however, the imperialists too were regrouping themselves, on the basis of the world balance of power resulting from the war. Employing new combinations and new methods, they returned to their struggle for the control of China's resources and people.

Internationally, the United States had emerged as the leading imperialist power. With its new strength, it forced Japan to disgorge her wartime gains in China. It also dictated the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. The shift in the relationship of forces, and the attempt to restore a joint imperialist front in China on this new basis, were reflected in the treaties concluded at the Washington Conference among the victors in the First World War, which was held in November 1921-February 1922.

In one of these treaties, the Nine-Power Pact, the notorious principle of the "Open Door in China" was once more subscribed to by the United States, the British Empire, Japan, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium — and the Beijing warlord government. This was regarded as a very subtle master-stroke by the United States. In the guise of giving China "equal status" as a participant, it forced her to "voluntarily" recognize the right of penetration not just of one foreign power (as in Japan's Twenty-one Demands) but of many, among which the U. S.A. was now the strongest economically and politically.

At the same time, a new U. S.-British-French-Japanese banking consortium was created for investment in China — showing clearly that the treaty was a tool for the world's finance-capital. The combination was dominated by American bankers (instead of British as in the past). An immediate aim of its U. S. organizers was the financial penetration of Japan's sphere of influence in Manchuria. That area was now triply interesting to American imperialism: as a rich field of exploitation, as a base for domination of China, and as a military staging area against the Soviet revolution.

The Washington treaties, and the banking consortium, wore the outward garb of "international agreement." But this was the sheerest humbug, as was quickly shown by events. Inside China, each imperialist group began fever-

ishly to build up its own warlords, for military attempts to control the whole country. A flood of World War I surplus arms, and those captured from the defeated Germans and Austrians, was shipped to each warlord by his backers. These guns soon began shooting.

Japan channelled weapons to her new candidate for “strong man of China,” Zhang Zuolin, a militarist of the Fengtian clique. The British and Americans did the same for the mercenary they favored, Wu Peifu of the Zhili clique.* Throughout the next few years, bought-and-paid-for militarist armies fought each other and devastated the countryside to decide only one thing, which imperialist would gain the advantage over the others in despoiling the country.

On the surface, therefore, China appeared to be in a worse state of disintegration and weakness than ever before. The wave of mass protest that characterized the “May 4” demonstrations had temporarily subsided. This was because it had arisen around a specific issue, the signature of the Treaty of Versailles, and was not yet linked to a worked-out program for the Chinese revolution as a whole. But behind the misleading newspaper headlines which dealt with the rise and fall of warlords, a fateful process was taking shape. The Communist Party was beginning to organize the working class. How ripe the situation was for such a development can be seen from one fact. At the time of its First Congress, the Party had only 50 members. Yet it was already becoming the leading ideological force in the ranks of labor, a position from which no other political influence would henceforth dislodge it. And it was the working class which, after “May 4,” fought the first great battles against imperialism.

From the beginning, the mass actions of the working class in China were political as well as economic. Complete lack of democratic rights — and triple oppression by imperialism, the semi-feudal regime and capitalism — did not allow the development of a legal trade-union movement. Nor, under these circumstances, could a well-paid stratum of skilled “labor aristocracy” arise, to mislead the movement into reformist channels.

In 1918 only 6,000 workers participated in strikes in China. In 1919, when

* Fengtian and Zhili were the old names for the present Liaoning province (in northeastern China) and Hebei province (in northern China).

there was still no working-class political party, railwaymen, metal workers, machinists, printers and tramway workers walked out in support of the general national demands of "May 4." This brought the number of strikers to 100,000. In 1922, the year after the Communist Party was formed and made contact with the workers through such means as welfare societies, clubs and night schools, 300,000 workers downed tools.

In January of that year, some 60,000 seamen and dock-workers struck for more pay for a period of eight weeks in Hongkong, tying up all shipping in this direct possession of British imperialism. Their struggle was supported by railwaymen all the way from Guangzhou in South China to Mukden (now Shenyang) in the Northeast who formed committees of solidarity and raised and remitted funds to the strikers. Before it ended it developed into a partial general strike of all trades in Hongkong itself, and British troops deployed along the border actually fired on workers seeking to leave the colony, thus exposing for all to see the Achilles' heel of imperialism, its inability to function without workers to exploit.

The result of the strike taught another lesson. No previous struggle, whether of the Chinese peasantry fighting by itself, or of the Chinese capitalists, had been able to wrest the slightest concession from imperialism. But the resolute, united fight of the seamen and other workers in Hongkong won a 15-30% wage increase and the legalization of their trade union, which had previously been outlawed by an ordinance of the British governor.

The rest of 1922 was filled with strikes and organizing campaigns throughout China.

The workers demanded wages fit for human beings. In Shanghai, even skilled workers were earning the equivalent of U.S. \$6 a month, at the then rate of exchange; unskilled workers were getting U.S. \$ 4; women and juveniles much less.

They fought for an 8 or 10-hour day. In machine industries, for example, the working day ranged from 14 to 17 hours.

They struggled for union recognition. Working-class organizations as well as all work stoppages were illegal under the laws of the warlord

government.

The leadership of the workers, in the immense majority of cases, was in the hands of Communists. Mao Zedong, in 1922, was elected chairman of the Hunan provincial trade union. Then came strikes in Changsha, the 20,000-miners Anyuan colliery in neighboring Jiangxi province and elsewhere in the area. The Anyuan strike, led by Liu Shaoqi, was of special importance. It stopped coal supplies to the Hanyeping Steel Works, then the biggest enterprise of its kind in China, belonging to bureaucrat-capitalists financed and controlled by Japan. Thus it was a direct challenge to the reactionary warlord government and the imperialists. The Anyuan organization was strong not only in its sound structure from pitface and workshop to the enterprise as a whole, but especially in the Marxist-Leninist political education given by its network of workers' classes and schools. This organization afterwards gave support to the strike movement elsewhere, and to the revolutionary forces in the anti-warlord Northern expedition in 1926-27. Still later, after Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal, it was not crashed by his White Terror but gave an armed workers' unit to, and acted as a secret liaison point for, the Autumn Harvest Uprising led by Mao Zedong in 1927 and the subsequently established Jinggangshan rural revolutionary base, the first one to be set up by the Chinese Red Army and the first seat of workers' and peasants' political power in all China.

From the early 1920's, the rank and file of the Chinese workers showed themselves ready to fight and die rather than endure the hell of unbelievably depressed conditions and absolute lack of the most elementary rights. They entered into a life-and-death war against precisely those things that made the country a low-wage El Dorado for foreign finance-capital, and against the Chinese militarists, who were ready to kill workers as well as peasants to maintain these "advantages."

The main arena of class conflict was not in the light industries in which national capitalism was most developed but in railways, shipping and their subsidiary repair works and mines which represented the mechanism through which all China, including the countryside, was laid under tribute by the impe-

rialist powers. It was here that the interests of imperialism were dominant and most closely interwoven with those of the warlords. It was here too that the working class was most concentrated and able to develop nationwide contact and unity of action. Moreover, it was here that the workers could muster support from other parts of the population, including sections of the national bourgeoisie which were also penalized by foreign control of communications and basic enterprises. All these factors led toward a violent collision with imperialism. They also made an ever-growing number of thoughtful patriots begin to understand that the working class now stood in the van of the whole fight against national enslavement.

The inevitable battle was joined on the British-dominated Beijing-Hankou railway, then controlled by the militarist Wu Peifu, to whom those parts of the revenues which were not paid to foreign shareholders were siphoned as a convenient method of financing his armies.

In August 1922 the workers of the Changxindian Locomotive and Car Repair Factory, near Beijing, grouping themselves around their Communist-organized club and evening school, fought for and won an 8-hour day, paid rest-days, higher wages and other rights. Their success was followed by the organization of unions at other stations. The inaugural session of a general union for the whole line was called at Zhengzhou in Henan province for February 1, 1923, of which open notice was given in the newspapers and sent to the railway administration.

The administration gave its permission, but secretly appealed to Wu Peifu for troops who cordoned the meeting place. The delegates and local railway workers, indignant at the treachery, broke the cordon and proclaimed the founding of the union, whose offices were raided and destroyed by soldiers the same night. The union then called a general strike. The demands were: 1. Dismissal of the warlord-appointed director of the northern section of the line who had betrayed his own word, and of the Zhengzhou chief of police; 2. Compensation for the trade union's losses and return of its confiscated banners; 3. A formal apology for the raids; 4. Paid Sundays and holidays for all railway personnel.

The general strike was disciplined and completely effective. Not a train moved anywhere along the line, but stranded passengers did not suffer; food and lodging was provided by the strike committee and travellers near their destination were transported there by other means.

Frightened by the demonstration of working-class strength, the U.S., British and other diplomatic representatives handed in a joint note to the Beijing government. They demanded immediate suppression of the strike, the pretext being that it endangered the repayment of foreign loans, with which the railway had been built.

Wu Peifu then dispatched troops to capture the temporary headquarters the union had set up in Jiang'an, near Hankou. The railwaymen put up a long and stout resistance, with arms wrenched from the hands of the soldiers, before they were overcome. The workers' leaders who were arrested included two Communists, the union's branch-chairman, Lin Xiangqian, and its legal adviser, the intellectual Shi Yang. They were ordered to call the men back to work and both defiantly refused. After this Lin was shot and Shi was tortured to death. On February 7, soldiers at Changxindian near Beijing, the starting point of the workers' organization, fired on the massed strikers, killing four men and wounding scores.

The slaughter aroused nationwide indignation. Thousands of people from every section of society turned out to the funeral of the victims, which was held in Beijing itself. Protest strikes were called on four other railways, in the Japanese-dominated Hanyeping Iron and Steel Works and in other industrial plants. The striking railwaymen continued to hold out and did not return to their jobs until called back by the union.

February 7, 1923, the date of the climax of the strike struggle, stands at the next nodal point in Chinese revolutionary development after May 4, 1919. Hu Qiaomu, in his *Thirty Years of the Communist Party of China*, enumerated the lessons of "February 7":

It showed the rapid development of the organized strength and revolutionary initiative of the working class, enhancing its prestige and that

of the Communist Party among the whole people.

At the same time it proved that without strong allies and its own armed forces, the working class could not defeat the fully-armed warlord reaction in circumstances in which no democratic rights existed.

These facts taught the Party and the working class that in order to achieve victory in the Chinese revolution, it was necessary to form an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal alliance with the peasants, who constitute 80 per cent of the people, with the scores of millions of urban petty bourgeoisie and with those democratic elements of the bourgeoisie who stood for fighting against imperialism and feudalism, in order to oppose armed counter-revolution by armed revolution.

XIII

FORMING THE REVOLUTIONARY UNITED FRONT (1923-1925)

The Communist Party, in the Manifesto of its Second Congress in May 1922, had already called for a broadly based struggle “to eliminate civil strife, overthrow the warlords and establish internal peace; to overthrow the oppression of international imperialism and achieve the complete independence of the Chinese nation; to unify the whole of China into a genuine democratic republic.” Despite failure to stress working-class leadership in the revolution and to set down a clear program of land to the landless and land-poor peasants, this Manifesto was by far the clearest statement the Chinese people had yet had of the aims and perspectives of their struggle.

A year later, the Third Party Congress, held after the “February 7” events, took concrete steps to create the revolutionary alliance that was needed. It pointed out that the working class was not alone, and did not need to fight alone, in its opposition to the imperialists and warlords.

The peasantry, plunged into starvation by warlord exactions and falling agricultural prices, had risen in revolt in 1922 in various parts of North China. The first peasant Union, 200,000 strong, led by the Communist Peng Pai had arisen in the South.

The national capitalists too were ground down after their brief wartime revival. They were suffering not only from the old imperialist and bureaucratic pressures but also from the post-war world economic depression which had

begun in 1921 and the virtual destruction of the internal market by militarist civil war. The Party therefore made an offer of united front action, on a common program, with the Kuomintang. The latter was again in a fighting mood because of the national capitalists' plight, but was unable to act effectively because it had never succeeded in making contact with the working people of town and country.

The offer for common action with capitalist elements was based on Lenin's principle of the fundamental distinction between revolution in imperialist countries, where the bourgeois are the oppressors of their own and other peoples, and in colonial and dependent countries, where some bourgeois too are oppressed by imperialism. In these circumstances, Lenin had pointed out, Communists should "support the bourgeois liberation movements in colonial countries, but only when these movements are truly revolutionary movements and when their representatives will not hamper us in educating and organizing the peasantry and the masses of the exploited in a revolutionary spirit."*

Such a situation now existed in China and led to an unprecedented growth of the militant national revolutionary movement.

The Kuomintang of the time was led by Sun Yat-sen, that incorruptible patriot who, despite many mistakes and miscalculations, had never lost his fighting spirit or his capacity to learn from events. Sun had long understood that armed Chinese warlordism could only be overcome, and the country united, by revolutionary armed struggle. But he had concentrated on finding an existing army as an instrument, and therefore tried to associate himself with some "more patriotic" warlord. Taking this one-sided approach, he had placed reliance on what could not be relied on, and by contrast under-estimated the revolutionary potentialities of the anti-imperialist mass movement of May 4, 1919. Furthermore, he then still misunderstood the nature of imperialism. In a book called *The International Development of China*, he had tried to per-

* *Report on the National and Colonial Question to the Second Congress of the Communist International*, July 26, 1920.

suade foreign capitalists that they could avoid economic crisis after the First World War by doing business with a united sovereign China engaged in construction, instead of trying to tear her apart and eliminating her as a market, by efforts at political domination. But to expect such a thing before a strong sovereign China existed as a fact to reckon with, and to hope that imperialists would help instead of opposing the creation of such a China, proved to be pure illusion.

For this misunderstanding of world realities, Sun Yat-sen had paid dearly. His advice to the big powers was ignored. Instead, a “patriotic” warlord he had banked on, the southern general Chen Jiongming, was bought over by the British and drove temporarily from his own capital at Guangzhou. This deservedly forgotten militarist turncoat, only a short while before, had been rapturously lauded as “the most impressive of all the officials I met in China... a man likely to become a national figure of the first order,” by that pundit of western liberalism, the famous American “liberal educator” John Dewey.* Professor Dewey, at the time, was the favored philosopher and sage of all those in China who ever since the May 4 Movement of 1919 had wanted to divert the rising revolutionary interest of her young people from Marxism (and hence the much-feared “Bolshevism”) to the safer (for imperialism) paths of pragmatism and administrative and educational reform.

Sun Yat-sen, however, did not belong to that category. Having admired the Russian revolution from the start he began, from 1921 onward, to study it for practical guidance. He wrote to Soviet leaders: “I am extremely interested in your cause, especially in the organization of your Soviets, your army and education Like Moscow, I would like to lay the foundations of the Chinese Republic deep in the minds of the younger generation — the workers of tomorrow.”

In 1923, Sun had conversations with representatives of the Chinese Com-

* Dewey, John, *China, Japan and the U.S.A.*, (“New Republic” Pamphlet) New York, 1921, p.39. The author further lauded Chen Jiongming as “straightforward... of unquestioned integrity” and, irony of ironies, as a man who “can give and also command loyalty — a fact which in itself makes him almost unique.” Loyalty to what and to whom?

munist Party. He also talked with Adolf Joffe, a Soviet diplomat who had come to establish normal relations with the imperialist-dominated government in Beijing but had not been received there. The Chinese Communist Party made proposals for cooperation which Sun found reasonable and good. Under its influence, he drastically revised his own views and program. These new ideas Sun promoted with great enthusiasm, as the key to the success of the Chinese revolution for which he had been looking throughout his career.

The "Three Major Policies" which Sun now propounded for his Kuomintang party were: Alliance with Soviet Russia; Alliance with the Chinese Communist Party; Support for the workers and peasants' movement. In a series of lectures reinterpreting the Three People's Principles which he had first laid down almost twenty years earlier, he brought forward and greatly extended the revolutionary features which the Kuomintang party had abandoned in its disastrous parliamentary manoeuvring after 1911.

The Principle of Nationalism had originally meant mainly the substitution of Han (China's majority nationality) rule for that of the Qing emperors, who were Manchus, a limited concept now outdated by events. The new content it was now given was the liberation of China from all forms of imperialist control and full equality for all nationalities within China. It was further characteristic of Sun Yat-sen, who all his life had drawn sustenance from the democratic heritage not only of China but of all people, that his nationalism was always linked with the internationalist idea of peace and "universal harmony" among the nations of the world. But this was unthinkable without its most minimal prerequisite, equality; whence came his hatred and contempt for colonialism. Of the ruling groups of the imperialist powers, once he had grasped their nature, he wrote:

They use the few not only to hold in leash the great number of people on their own continents and in their own countries, but to spread the plague to Asia where 900 million people are held down by the few. This is unspeakably cruel and nothing could be more abominable.

And Sun drew from this lesson: "The independence movement of the peoples of Asia can succeed only when they stand together." Great tasks of struggle had yet to be accomplished before the day "when the Great Principle is applied; when world brotherhood will ensure."

The Principle of Democracy was clarified as follows:

"The so-called democratic system of the various modern nations is usually monopolized by the bourgeoisie and has become an instrument for oppressing the common people, while the Principle of Democracy of the Kuomintang is shared by the common people and is not permitted to be privately owned by a minority."

The Principle of Livelihood was once more centered on the demand of "land to the tillers," making possible an appeal to the peasantry. The right of the workers to organization and decent wages and conditions was recognized. The rights of private capital were not held to apply to monopolies and to basic branches of the economy, which were to be nationalized by the democratic state. Though not a Marxist (he argued on many points against Marxist views), Sun Yat-sen regarded the Marxists as comrades-in-arms in the same struggle. "We cannot say that communism is in conflict with the principle of people's livelihood," he declared.

"Far from it, it is a good friend of this principle... I welcome socialism because it is good for the country and benefits the people. Social justice requires that various products be placed under public ownership so that the people's well-being can be brought about. When socialism is realized in our country, the young will get a proper education, the old will be taken good care of and everyone will have work to do."

Sun's principles were not those of scientific socialism. They did not define the role of various classes in society or recognize the class struggle as the motive force of history. They did, however, represent a common program

acceptable at that stage. They were not based on the interests of the few; Sun had never feared the masses and his conclusion from his experience was that only the masses in motion could save China.

Sun Yat-sen's party was thus converted into a revolutionary alliance, with the participation of the Communists who also retained their own organization. Its new nature was expressed in the Manifesto of the First National Congress of the Kuomintang, held in January 1924. This document critically examined the Kuomintang's errors since 1912 (particularly the surrender of power to Yuan Shikai in that year). It denounced the unequal treaties imposed by imperialism. It pledged the Kuomintang to the granting of trade union rights, and to other measures to improve the situation of workers and peasants. It also defined the human and political rights of soldiers (a very important step in relation not only to its own army but also in extending its influence to the armies of the warlords in which some 1.5 million soldiers were treated like cattle). The political foundations of the Manifesto were the "Three Major Policies" newly adopted by Sun Yat-sen, and the Three People's Principles in their new interpretation. For these Sun fought resolutely and unyieldingly. When some of the right-wing members of the Kuomintang opposed cooperation with the Communists, he declared that this meant the renunciation of the revolution. "If you don't want to cooperate with the Communists," he blazed at them, as his wife Soong Qing Ling later recalled, "I will declare the Kuomintang dissolved and join the Communist Party."

In 1924, a new revolutionary government was set up in Guangzhou. It established the Huangpu Military Academy, with the Kuomintang officer Chiang Kai-shek as dean and the Left Wing Kuomintang figure Liao Zhongkai with the Communist Zhou Enlai as his deputy and as political director, to train commanders for a new type of national, anti-warlord army. Its cadets went straight from their classrooms to quell the revolt of the reactionary Guangzhou "Merchant Volunteers," financed and led from British-held Hongkong. (Britain's Consul-General, under orders from her first Labor government under Ramsay MacDonald, which proved no less imperialist than the preceding Tory and Liberal ones, arrogantly threatened naval action if artillery was used against

the rebels and drew a sharp answer from Sun Yat-sen.) The trade union and peasant movements gained wider influence. Guangzhou became the center of the revived hopes and activity of everything that was honest and forward-looking in all parts of China.

Meanwhile the reactionary Beijing government tried to meet the coming storm by demagogically repainting itself in democratic colors. It arranged a "presidential election" (won by the militarist Cao Kun, by bribing members of its rump parliament with £2.5 million sterling from American sources). It tried to satisfy public opinion by finally establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. But this did not stop the influence of the revolutionary developments in Guangzhou from being felt even in the heart of warlord-dominated North China.

In October 1924, the "Christian General" Feng Yuxiang, who had no direct links with imperialism, rebelled against his superior Wu Peifu, marched to Beijing, and put an end to the power both of that warlord and of "President" Cao Kun, whose foreign-financed purchase of the supreme office thus proved a very poor bargain.

Simultaneously, impelled by the revolutionary development in the south, Feng Yuxiang cleaned up a piece of unfinished business pending since the 1911 Revolution. At long last, he ejected the deposed ex-emperor and his phantom court from the "Forbidden City" of Beijing, thus putting a belated end to the deal made by the dictator Yuan Shikai with the abdicating Manchus. The ex-emperor, Pu Yi, sought shelter first in the Dutch Embassy and then in the Japanese concession in Tianjin (to re-emerge, much later, as "emperor" of the puppet state of "Manchukuo," which Japan set up in northeast China following her seizure of the region in 1931-32, and which was swept away after Japan's defeat in World War II).

The rising tide of the national movement forced the Beijing government to propose a conference for the peaceful unification of the country. Sun Yat-sen accepted an invitation to attend, and was met by enthusiastic popular demonstrations on his way. On coming to Beijing, however, he found the rulers there not at all anxious to accept his insistence on a democratically

elected National Assembly to devise the new state power for all China. Soon after his arrival, he fell ill, and on March 12, 1925 died of cancer of the liver. The last acts of the great and patriotic revolutionary democrat were to dictate a Testament to his party and to send a letter to the Central Executive Committee of the U.S. S.R.

The Testament read:

For 40 years I have devoted myself to the cause of the people's revolution with but one end in view: the elevation of China to a position of freedom and equality among the nations. My experiences during these 40 years have convinced me that to attain this goal we must bring about an awakening of our own people and ally ourselves in common struggle with those peoples of the world who treat us as equals.

The Revolution is not yet finished. Let our comrades follow my Plans for National Reconstruction, Fundamentals of National Reconstruction, Three People's Principles, and the Manifesto issued by the First National Congress of our Party, and make every effort to carry them out. Above all, my recent declarations in favor of holding a National Congress of the People of China and abolishing the unequal treaties should be carried into effect as soon as possible.

The letter to the world's first socialist state was a revolutionary pledge to fight shoulder to shoulder in the struggle to free the world from imperialism. It read:

Dear Comrades:

While I lie here stricken by a malady against which men are powerless, my thoughts are turned towards you, and towards the future of my party and my country.

You stand at the head of a union of free republics — that heritage left to the oppressed peoples by the immortal Lenin. With the aid of that heritage the victim of imperialism will inevitably achieve emancipation

from that international regime whose foundations have been rooted for ages in slavery, wars and injustice.

I leave behind me a party which, as I always hoped, will be bound up with you in the historic work of the final liberation of China and other exploited nations from the imperialist order. By the will of fate, I must leave my work unfinished and hand it over to those who, remaining true to the principles and teachings of the party, will thereby be my true followers.

Therefore I charged the Kuomintang to continue the work of the revolutionary nationalist movement, so that China, reduced by the imperialists to the position of a semi-colonial country, may become free.

With this object I have instructed the party to be in constant contact with you. I firmly believe in the continuance of the support you have hitherto accorded my country.

Taking leave of you, dear comrades, I want to express the hope that the day will come when the U.S.S.R. will welcome a friend and ally in a mighty, free China, and that in the great struggle for the liberation of the oppressed peoples of the world, both these allies will go forward to victory hand in hand.

With fraternal greetings.

SUN YAT-SEN

The Communist Party of China, as Lenin predicted, has maintained and carried forward the revolutionary core of Sun's teachings, by leading the Chinese nation and people to unprecedented strength, progress and equality. History has shown, too, how fraudulent was the pretence of reactionary usurpers in the later Kuomintang that they were "Sun Yat-sen's heirs."

What of the revolutionary Sino-Soviet friendship which was so trenchantly proclaimed in those early years, and which after the liberation in 1949 altered the whole world balance of forces in progressive direction? It was subverted, by Khrushchev and his successors. From the summary withdrawal

of economic aid to China when she would not consent to their hegemonism in 1960 to the armed border attacks of 1969 and the maintenance of a million-strong army on her frontiers for many years afterward, they proved again and again that they did not regard China as an equal but only wanted her as an unfree object of control. This, of course, was not only in complete contradiction to “a friend and ally... a mighty free China” but an unrealizable day dream.

As for state-to-state relations, it was not China that aggravated theoretical debate into diplomatic and military estrangement. On the contrary, she repeatedly declared that inter-governmental relations could improve if grounded on the principles valid for all such links: mutual respect for sovereignty and territory, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence. It was on China’s initiative, over many years, that talks were held on questions ranging from border issues to overall normalization of ties.

In September 1979, a Chinese delegate, in Moscow for the overall talks, said: “We hope for positive results. This is the ardent wish of the Chinese people and, I believe, also of the Soviet people.”

The main obstacles that needed to be overcome were not just matters of outlook but of clear and measurable hegemonist Soviet state behavior — such as the massing of troops on China’s borders and military pressures on her through third countries on her flanks.*

Now we shall return to history.

* These obstacles too were settled in later years by negotiation with the Soviet Union and/or its successor states — on the basis of equality.

XIV

FIRST REVOLUTIONARY CIVIL WAR

(1925-1927)

The months following Dr. Sun's death in 1925 proved to ever-broader sections of the Chinese people the correctness of his conclusion that imperialist and warlord rule had to be swept away if the nation was to live. Internationally, at this time, world capitalism, though it had failed to overthrow the Soviet power led by Lenin in Russia, had nevertheless succeeded in throwing back the wave of militant working-class action elsewhere in Europe. With American big business and its government marshalling the shaken capitalist forces, and financing and otherwise supporting reaction everywhere, the German and Hungarian revolutions were defeated and Fascism was installed in Italy.

The capitalist economic crisis of 1921-22 had been succeeded by relative stabilization. As before, imperialism was dreaming of wiping out the world's first socialist state. But first it had to roll back the revolutionary wave in the East, particularly in China. One by one, every group in the Chinese national movement became the target of this effort.

Between February and April 1925, strikes involving over 100,000 workers took place in Japanese-owned cotton mills in Shanghai and Qingdao. The conditions in these mills can be imagined from the fact that the demands always included, besides economic points and union recognition, "the abolition of whipping." The strikes invariably involved clashes with "international"

and warlord police. Nevertheless, they won various ameliorations by stubborn struggle.

In May, after the Second All-China Labor Congress in Guangzhou at which 514,000 organized workers from all over China were represented, the Japanese government demanded that the Chinese authorities in Shanghai dissolve the textile workers' union. In the same month, a Japanese factory guard there killed the Communist trade-unionist Gu Zhenghong and wounded other workers. This and similar acts of provocation and suppression led to a mounting crisis in China's greatest city, where the biggest concentration of industrial workers faced the biggest concentration of imperialist power.

Students and democratic intellectuals who launched a movement to raise funds for the wounded strikers were also thrown in jail. The authorities of Shanghai's imperialist "International Settlement," under the chairmanship of Stirling Fessenden, an American, demanded the imposition of press censorship and other repressive acts. The climax came on May 30. On that day, a squad of Settlement police commanded by the British Inspector Everson fired into a demonstration of 10,000 students and other citizens who were demanding the release of the arrested men and the cessation of foreign interference in Chinese politics. May 30, 1925, after May 4, 1919 and February 7, 1923, was the third key date in the awakening and development of the nationwide mass movement. It sealed in blood the new alliance of all democratic classes and groups.

The imperialists held a mock "inquiry" in which the butcher Everson was held to be blameless. The British judge, Sir Henry Gollan, colonial Chief Justice of Hongkong, and the Japanese judge, K. Suga, held that "the order to fire was justifiable." The United States judge, E. Ginley Johnson of Manila, also a colonial official, delivered himself of a gem truly worthy of Pontius Pilate: "With a much larger force of policemen on the scene, the necessity for firing might have been avoided. Due to the absence of a larger number of police it was impossible."*

* Borg, Dorothy, *American Policy and the Chinese Revolution, 1925-28*, New York, 1947, quoting the *North China Herald* of August 20, 1927.

The people throughout China rose in fury. The wave of strikes grew ever higher. Schools and universities were closed while their students demonstrated for the expulsion of the imperialists. A popular boycott of British and Japanese goods was organized and enforced. Bloody clashes took place. In Guangzhou, protest demonstrators were machine-gunned and slaughtered by British and French troops from the island concession of Shamen, across a narrow creek from their line of march. This massacre was conducted from a foreign enclave in the capital city of the revolution. It dramatized more than ever the need for eliminating imperialist privileges in China.

A new general strike of tremendous proportions completely paralyzed the British colony of Hongkong for 16 months. Foreign troops were landed on the China coast. As in the time of the Taiping rising, armed bands of foreign freebooters were formed. It is characteristic of their nature that one, composed of nationals of many imperialist powers as well as refugee Russian Whiteguards, adopted the name of "Shanghai Fascisti." The *North China Herald*, a British paper which then had the American Rodney Gilbert as one of its chief writers, acted as chief propagandist for the "Fascisti." Gilbert clamored for the application to Chinese patriots of "the general principle known as 'Judge Lynch' in the old Wild West...."

As a result of the action of the Hongkong workers, the Guangzhou revolutionary base was strengthened by a new and important element, the 130,000 organized strikers who had left the British colony. Active preparations were launched for what was known as the Northern Expedition, a military campaign to wipe out the warlords, the chief internal instruments of imperialist control. By the end of 1925 the British-backed militarist, Chen Jiongming, had been driven from Guangdong province. Beginning in July 1926, the new army won a series of victories unparalleled since Taiping days. It took possession of Hankou on the Yangtze in September, only three months after it started from Guangzhou. Its rapid progress was everywhere aided by the people, an important part being played by the peasant movement. In Hunan, where Mao Zedong was active, the number of members of peasants associations grew to 2,000,000 by the beginning of 1927, and jumped to over 5,000,000 in April of that year.

The military campaign so far had been conducted in the interior, away from the coast. Therefore it did not come into collision with the main imperialist forces. But Britain's warships bombarded the unarmed people at Wanxian, on the upper Yangtze, on September 5, 1926 and her troops fired at a victory demonstration at Hankou, the new capital of the revolution. The Hankou workers, responded on January 4, 1927 by taking over the British concession in that city. The Wuhan government then demanded the formal return of the concession to China. Britain, forced to resort to manoeuvres in the face of the revolutionary storm, gave her concurrence.

This was the first piece of China's alienated soil which her people had recovered since the First Opium War.

The revolutionary National Government had moved from Guangzhou to Wuhan (the triple city of Wuchang-Hankou-Hanyang) on January 1, 1927. In the meantime, a number of local militarists were beginning to declare for the revolution. Some, like the "Christian General" Feng Yuxiang, whose troops now dominated part of Northwest China, were comparatively patriotic, close in viewpoint to the national capitalists and had had relations for some time with Guangzhou; they also had Kuomintang members and Communists in the ranks of their armies. Others chose to drift with, rather than take the risk of breasting, the onrushing tide, hoping for some later chance to bring back the old order.

These events appeared to ease the military tasks of the united front. But politically they represented a very dangerous infiltration of unreliable elements into its ranks. Of 56 generals of the old armies who declared for the revolutionary side in December 1926 and January 1927, by a contemporary calculation, 51 were landlords with holdings 250 or more times those of an average peasant family. These generals, with their troops, continued to garrison areas in the provinces of Anhui, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi and Fujian in which their property lay.

By the beginning of 1927, the Kuomintang, reinforced by the adherence of Communists and by mass recruitment among workers and peasants, had grown to 5,000,000 members. The Communist Party, from a membership of

only 900 at the time of the Shanghai Massacre of May 30, 1925, had grown to over 57,000 members. The workers organized into trade unions numbered nearly 3 million. The peasant unions had nearly 10 million members.

With victory in sight, however, the question arose: Who would reap its profits? Would the working class help the vast peasantry to achieve its aims and thus mobilize the overwhelming majority of China's population? Would it thus lead the whole united front on to the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the establishment of a democratic republic which would later embark on the transition to socialism?

Or: Would politicians in fact serving the big capitalists, compradores and landlords or ready to serve them, seize the commanding posts in the government and army, push aside the worker-peasant masses as soon as they had served their purpose, and make a new compromise with imperialism at their expense?

The Communist Party, under its then leadership, did not take the proper steps to ensure the first alternative. It was insufficiently aware of the dangers of the second. In this situation, elements in the Kuomintang and the army command who had feudal, compradore or big capitalist ties, led by the commander-in-chief Chiang Kai-shek, began to think of rendering the mass movement "harmless." As the history of many bourgeois revolutions had shown, such elements were willing to cooperate with the mass movement for a time, but they wanted "the kind of cooperation that exists between a rider and his horse." They did not want a people's victory, they only wanted to ride to power on the people's backs. In China this tendency had already become clear early in 1926. Even before the start of the Northern Expedition, Chiang Kai-shek had surrounded the Guangzhou headquarters of the Hongkong strike committee with troops to enforce his will, arrested or ousted some Communist army and navy officers on trumped-up charges, taken steps to ensure his own undivided control of the armed forces, and connived at the assassination of Liao Zhongkai, a progressive leader in the Kuomintang whom he regarded as an obstacle to his aims.

In China during her 1925-27 revolution, the bourgeoisie was intrinsically

weak and vacillating and the people's movement was at a high tide of development. Therefore developments of this nature could have been minimized and possibly prevented. They were not, because the Communist Party itself was still weak, inexperienced and, worst of all, led by the right-wing opportunist Chen Duxiu, who capitulated to reaction.

The idea of the united front of all classes in China that were opposed to imperialism and feudalism (its form in 1924-27 was alliance and cooperation with Kuomintang) was a correct one for mobilizing the broadest forces against those two enemies. But this united front, in its turn, could only win the democratic revolution, and lay the basis for the future socialist one, if the working class and its Party really led it. Further, the working class had to build and cement, as the core of this united front, the firmest alliance with the peasantry. And without fail, the Party had to build revolutionary armed forces under its own leadership and work actively to ensure the revolutionary character of all the armed forces of this united front. In no other way could the future of the revolution be assured.

Chen Duxiu, however, in his anxiety to allay the fears of right-wing capitalists and semi-feudal elements in the Kuomintang, failed to do, or even to strive for, any of these things. Instead, he went so far as to use the authority of the Party to stop workers and peasants in the areas freed by the revolutionary armies from giving effect to the revolution's own slogans. He disregarded completely the insistence of Mao Zedong and others on consolidating the unity and mutual support of the workers and peasants as the backbone of the whole united front. His attitude to the peasants, in particular, was fatal. For not only are the toilers of the countryside the necessary main allies of the city workers in all countries but in China, at that time, they comprised some nine tenths of the population. The industrial workers — though the leading force — made up, numerically, no more than one or two percent, even counting their families. Only the peasants, furthermore, could overthrow feudalism, and in China feudalism was the base on which imperialism rested, so the peasants had to be the main force for victory in her entire anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution. Failure to mobilize, arm, and lead them in all-out struggle, therefore,

meant that the revolution would lose instead of win. The same was true of Chen Duxiu's failure to strive for proletarian leadership over the revolutionary armed forces. He was even ready to surrender it in units where it already existed at the first complaint or attack by Kuomintang right-wingers. Such surrenders inevitably meant that the small minority of revolutionary workers, deprived of the support of the vast majority of the people, would be defenseless from massacre by the combined forces of the imperialists and the domestic exploiters.

Thus Right opportunism planted the seeds of the defeat of the revolution of 1925-27 at the very time when the revolutionary armies were victoriously approaching the main imperialist strongholds on the coast. In fact, being a reflection in the Party of the needs of the reactionary classes in society as a whole, it created for them, from inside the revolutionary camp, the conditions for a comeback which they could no longer achieve outside it.

The imperialist government, at that time with the U.S. and Britain in the lead, watched these trends with particular care. The warlords were collapsing just as completely as the Qing dynasty had done in 1911, and the foreign powers knew that two methods only remained to stem the tide: to throw in their own forces on the scale of a major war, or to use some new traitor of the type of Yuan Shikai to subvert the revolution. The method of direct foreign military attack was risky: its cost and results were unforeseeable. Also, the imperialists feared that it might lead not only to a major war in China but to revolts elsewhere in the colonial world and serious difficulties with democratic and working-class opinion at home (Britain, for example, was fresh from her own General Strike and a "Hands off China" movement was developing in many imperialist countries). So the method they chose was intrigue, with the use of foreign forces chiefly as a threat to the people and a shield for a new Chinese counter-revolution. And the fact that the opportunists within the Communist Party had prevented the unfettering of mass forces laid the groundwork for success by this method.

At the time of the surrender of the Hankou concession British diplomacy put on a face of unwonted sweetness. It tried to attract the right-wing ele-

ments in the Kuomintang by the possibility of “peaceful compromise” at the expense of the people. The semi-official *North China Daily News* in Shanghai, for instance, turned from heaping gutter abuse on Chang Kai-shek as a “Red bandit” to declarations that “the new government would find a friend in Britain” if only it “maintained law and order and controlled the mob.”* Washington, which had labored mightily for a generation, through missionary institutions and scholarships for Chinese students in the U.S., to create an influential body of American-oriented opinion in China, sent similar signals of compromise to its potential “friends” in the Kuomintang camp.

During the fighting in Nanjing, when the revolutionary army was entering that city, several foreigners were killed and wounded. This served as the pretext for the sanguinary bombardment of Nanjing by American and British destroyers on the Yangtze on March 24, 1927, followed by an American-British-French-Italian ultimatum. Both actions were meant to hurry a choice by Chiang Kai-shek and the right wing of the Kuomintang — for or against imperialism. Indeed, the then British Foreign Secretary, Sir Austen Chamberlain, later boasted in the House of Commons that the purpose had been “to help the conservatives against the radicals.”

Almost simultaneously, the great city of Shanghai was freed from warlord control not by Chiang Kai-shek’s army but by a heroic insurrection of the city’s workers under Communist leadership, in which Zhou Enlai, later to be the Premier of the People’s Republic of China, played a guiding part. Altogether, as the national revolutionary troops advanced, three workers’ risings took place in Shanghai. The first, at the end of 1925, was launched before the masses were properly set into motion, and the armed workers’ groups were crashed. The second, in the last week of February 1927, was preceded by a general strike call which brought out 300,000 workers. But it too was defeated, and the warlords tried to terrify the people by hanging the severed heads of arrested Communists from telegraph poles on the main streets. Nonetheless, the mass movement continued to spread. A new general strike,

* Borg, Dorothy, *op. cit.*

declared on March 21, involved 800,000 workers. In the third uprising, after two days of fighting, the warlords were expelled.

The Chinese bankers and compradores of Shanghai, in close league with the imperialists, played on the fears of the Chinese industrialists in the city. The latter, therefore, refused to enter the local revolutionary government that was set up. While the victorious workers prepared to welcome the national revolutionary army, the bankers sent secret emissaries to Chiang Kai-shek. They begged him to come and crush the mass movement, and promised him large-scale financial support, as well as the benevolent neutrality of the foreign troops in the Anglo-American "International Settlement" and the French Concession if he did so. By agreement with Stirling Fessenden, the U.S. chairman of the Anglo-American "International Settlement," and the authorities of the French Concession, the underworld thugs of the opium gangster Du Yuesheng were supplied with 5,000 foreign rifles and other equipment. Although the unequal treaties forbade any armed Chinese whatsoever to pass through any territory under foreign control, Du's men were given not only passage but trucks to carry them.* As a result, the workers' detachments were surprised from the rear.

On April 12, 1927, a day of crowning infamy, Chiang Kai-shek sent his own troops against the workers who had cleared the way for their entry into the city and killed many thousands. On his secret orders, troops commanded by right-wing Kuomintang officers staged similar massacres in Nanjing, in Guangzhou and among the peasants in the countryside. After this, no more was heard of the ultimatum which the foreign powers had presented as a result of the March 24 events in Nanjing. From the moment he became a traitor to and butcher of the people, Chiang became a "hero" to the capitalist press all over the world.

On April 18, on the heels of this wholesale murder, Chiang set up in Nanjing his own "Nationalist Government," consisting of right-wing Kuomintang politicians and militarists. This was an act of usurpation and

* Powell, John B., *My Twenty-five Years in China*, New York, 1943.

rebellion against the national-revolutionary government in Wuhan, from which Chiang held his commission. It is from the slaughter and treason of April 1927, from the imperialists and Du's opium gangsters, and from the illegally created Nanjing regime, that the Chiang Kai-shek clique derived its self-styled "rights as the legitimate government of China."

After Chiang's treason, the revolutionary political alliance continued to exist for three months in the Wuhan government. Its elements were now the "left-wing" Kuomintang, representing the middle and petty bourgeoisie, and the Communist Party, representing the workers and peasants. The Wuhan government ordered the dismissal of Chiang Kai-shek, who countered by imposing an economic blockade, cutting the city off from the lower Yangtze. During this time, in Wuhan and the territory under its control, the mass movement rose to new heights. Workers poured into the trade unions. Peasants formed new associations. Both clamored for arms and their spirit was high. But in this brief second stage of the 1925-27 revolution the seeds of disaster did not cease to germinate.

"Left-wing" Kuomintang politicians in Wuhan, among whom Wang Jingwei was prominent, began to waver and think of a "way out." They tried to insure themselves against both Chiang Kai-shek and the masses by depending more and more on the professional military officers still under their banner; nothing was further from their minds than arming the working people.

In the Communist Party, Chen Duxiu and other right-wingers continued to control policy. Although the Fifth Party Congress held shortly after Chiang's coup had stated that their error was failure to deepen the social content of the revolution, and although the opportunists accepted this criticism, the leadership was not changed. Mao Zedong, fresh from successes in organizing the peasants in Hunan province, strongly advocated that the Party place itself in the van of the anti-landlord movement and the armed rural people, with the poor peasants and farm laborers at their core. Having witnessed the power of the awakened peasants he demanded that all restrictions on them be removed, declaring his confidence in them, and their importance, in the following words:

They will smash all the trammels that bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation. They will sweep all the imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry into their graves. Every revolutionary party and every revolutionary comrade will be put to the test, to be accepted or rejected as they decide. There are three alternatives. To march at their head and lead them? To trail behind them, gesticulating and criticizing? Or to stand in their way and oppose them? Every Chinese is free to choose, but events will force you to make the choice quickly. *

The prediction, insofar as the ultimate future course of the Chinese revolution was concerned, was entirely accurate. But the Party leadership did not then make the choice that Mao urged. In fact, at the Fifth Congress, he was not even allowed to vote. Chen Duxiu remained as anxious as ever to avoid “alarming” the bourgeoisie, being willing even to disorganize and disarm the mass movement to accommodate them. Another right-winger in the Communist Party, Tan Pingshan who held the post of Minister of Agriculture in the Wuhan government, worked with might and main to stop the wave of militant peasant organization. Nothing was done to create army units with an adequate number of politically-steeled revolutionaries in the officer corps as well as the rank and file — an unforgivable omission in any revolution.

The waverings of Chen Duxiu and others — before and after — were inseparable from Right-Left see-sawing in the Communist International. While claiming policy leadership over all Communist parties it was engaged in internal struggles over its own policies. And these in turn reflected those within the Soviet Party — especially after Lenin’s death. Even without this factor, the International was too far removed from the scene of revolutions actually taking place — some, as in China, at great distances and much different environments — to judge their opportunities and dangers. So while undoubtedly of help to them in certain aspects, it proved a hindrance in others.

* “Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan,” *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, English edition, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing. Vol. I, 1965, pp.23-23.

It was aggravated by ill-conceived attempted back-seat driving from the outside. Mikhail Borodin, the Communist International adviser to the revolutionary united front — who was personally in touch with Stalin — was on the “cautious” side for most of this crucial period. Then, when the danger from the Kuomintang Right became all too plain, the International, made a 180-degree turn — from urging that the surging peasant movement be cooled off, to a call for the formation of village Soviets be formed as rural organs of power. Moreover, even before any were set up, the switch was communicated by another of the International’s envoys — M. N. Roy — to the reputedly “Left-wing” Kuomintang leader Wang Jingwei, chairman of the Wuhan government. Naively, this was supposed to appeal to Wang as support for him in his rivalry with Chiang Kai-shek. Instead, Wang, no less terrified of the masses reaching for power than was Chiang, reacted in the same way Chiang did. This long went unmentioned or slurred in China’s official Party histories. Her attitude was that, whatever the urging of the International had been, the Chinese Party had to shoulder the blame for mistakes and the duty to correct them in the light of conditions in its own country.

As a result of the various errors, both internal and external, and of the interaction of the two, the way was opened for careerists and reactionaries in the Wuhan armies to take the path of Chiang Kai-shek. From the end of May 1927 on, they began to destroy the peasant organizations, particularly in Hunan province, and to slaughter their leaders and active members. In June and July, there were desertions to Chiang, which included that of Feng Yuxiang north of the Yangtze. On July 15, at a time when 36 foreign warships had been allowed to sail unopposed up the Yangtze and cast anchor in Wuhan itself, the Kuomintang “left” under Wang Jingwei began massacres of workers, peasants, students and particularly of Communists. These were more bloody even than Chiang’s slaughter at Shanghai. Such was the hatred of the local reactionaries for every remnant of the mass movement, such was their desire to teach the “lower orders” a lesson, that hundreds of ricksha-pullers were wantonly shot down in the streets. Their only crime: during the revolution they had dared form a trade union. Girls with bobbed hair were seized and executed on that

“evidence” alone: if they cut off their traditional tresses, might they not be out for the overthrow of the entire traditional order?

The Wuhan government thus disappeared. All power passed to the “nationalist” regime of Chang Kai-shek in Nanjing. The leaders of the Kuomintang, in both governments, had now betrayed the entire heritage of Sun Yat-sen. His behest to fight for national independence was replaced by conniving with the imperialists. His behest to aid the workers and peasants was replaced by the killing of workers and peasants. His advocacy of an alliance with Communist Party was replaced by the slaughtering of Communists and making membership in the Party formally punishable by death. His advocacy of an alliance with the Soviet Union was supplanted by savage class hatred for it. In the leading ranks of the Kuomintang, only Sun Yat-sen’s widow, Soong Qing Ling, and a very few others continued to stand unwaveringly by Sun Yat-sen’s principles. As a result, they had to flee into exile.

Chiang Kai-shek, having gained supreme power, fell into the old role of the Qing dynasty, of Yuan Shikai and of the warlords. He became the ally and instrument of the imperialists against the Chinese people. He and his party were now the political representatives of the compradores in the cities and feudal reaction in the countryside. The weak national capitalists did not win political power, as they had hoped to do when they betrayed the revolution. Instead, they were gradually relegated to the same prospectless situation, both politically and economically, as they had occupied under other forms of the imperialist reactionary alliance.

Other events recalled the 1911 Revolution. No sooner was a “strong man” acceptable to imperialism in the saddle, than the new government began to be favored with recognition by the western powers: the United States was once more the first to grant it. Indeed, in the capitalist international community the road to even formal legitimacy for revolutionaries (“formal” because even when officially recognized, a revolutionary government continues to be considered a legitimate target for overthrow) is a very, very long one. But for counter-revolutionaries it is practically instant. Sometimes they are “recognized” even before they have properly settled their haunches in the seats of

power.

It is instructive, in view of subsequent attempts to paint the traitor Chiang Kai-shek as a "democrat," to cite some franker opinions expressed by foreign establishment spokesmen. During the period when Chiang was being enticed over, the American ex-Senator Silas Strawn, who had been the U.S. delegate in an international conference on Chinese tariffs, spoke of China's "need for a Mussolini."* And Professor A. Whitney Griswold, author of a work on the Far Eastern policy of the United States, long a standard textbook in American universities, wrote baldly that after Chiang took over the Kuomintang he "converted it into a fascist dictatorship."**

* Borg, Dorothy, *American Policy and the Chinese Revolution*, New York, 1947, p. 355.

** Griswold, A. Whitney, *Far Eastern Policy of the United States*, New York, 1938,

XV

SECOND REVOLUTIONARY CIVIL WAR (1927-1937)

The defeat of the revolution of 1925-27 was followed by a protracted White Terror of savage ferocity. The Chiang Kai-shek clique sought to turn back the wheel of history in the interests of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism (the bureaucrat-capitalists were a few top Kuomintang officials, including Chang, who gradually succeeded in establishing personal or family monopolies over various sectors of the economy through their control of the state machine). To do so, it butchered an estimated 450,000 Communists, workers, peasants, students and democratic intellectuals in 1927-29 alone, and a total of over a million, exclusive of those it killed in military battles, in the whole period 1927-37. Its principle at this time, as openly stated by the renegade Wang Jingwei, was “it is better to have a thousand innocent perish than to let one Communist escape.” The authorities of the various foreign concessions collaborated in this slaughter. They hounded progressives in their areas and turned them over to Chiang’s executioners.*

By this was only one side of the picture. The other was that, during 1925-27, the stream of the Chinese revolution had turned into a vast and turbulent

* Long known, this function has recently been researched and documented in detail by the American scholar Frederick Wakeman in his *Policing Shanghai, 1927-1937*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1995. After China’s recovery of Hongkong, more such examples are likely to be unearthed from its colonial past.

ocean engulfing the whole of society. This ocean, while it might have ebbs as well as flow-tides, could never again be confined. After the defeat of its first round of great mass struggles, and its desertion by the bourgeoisie, the democratic revolution of the Chinese people came under the undivided political leadership of the Party of the Chinese working class, the Communist Party of China. And the Communists and people, as Mao Zedong later wrote, "were neither cowed nor conquered nor exterminated. They picked themselves up, wiped off the blood, buried their fallen comrades and went into battle again."

A decisive step forward was taken on August 1, 1927 when the Party and the revolutionary classes of China, whom it led, acquired their own armed forces. On that day, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, He Long, Ye Ting and others led a revolt of 30,000 troops against the counter-revolution in Nanchang, Jiangxi province. Thus they laid the foundations of the Chinese Red Army, the present Chinese People's Liberation Army, which still observes that date as its birthday.

On August 7, at a special conference, the Central Committee of the Party dropped the opportunist Chen Duxiu from leadership. It confirmed that a revolutionary army must be set up under the Party's leadership. It pointed out that the land problem was crucial to the revolution and made it the duty of the Party to lead the peasants to take up weapons and seize the crops and the land. Mao Zedong carried out this decision in Hunan and Jiangxi province. He directed the "Autumn Harvest Uprisings" there (others took place in Hebei and Guangdong) and formed new armed detachments of workers, peasants and soldiers who had rebelled against the reactionary authorities.

Some months later the forces under Mao Zedong and Zhu De and Chen Yi made a junction in the Jinggangshan mountains in Jiangxi province. Here another great stride to the ultimate people's victory was taken through the establishment of the first stable rural base of revolutionary state power. Within two years, nineteen such bases had been established in rural areas of East, Central, South, West and Northwest China. A central Workers' and Peasants' Government had been set up at Ruijin in Jiangxi. From that time on, there was always some part of China with a democratic government led by the Commu-

nist Party and based on the alliance of workers and peasants, and this revolutionary regime was the predecessor of the People's Republic of China of today. Though decimated, the Party strengthened its will and confidence, took to arms, boldly kindled the agrarian revolution and hoisted the flag of revolutionary state power. All this was then on what seemed a tiny scale, but it pioneered a great historic road. It was, as Mao Zedong has called it, the "single spark" that "can start a prairie fire."

Such was the beginning of the ten-year Second Revolutionary Civil War. It was a peasant war under working-class leadership. In its course, the unity of these two classes, comprising the vast majority of the Chinese people, was consolidated once and for all.

In policy, in this new situation, there was a series of new mistakes before the correct line prevailed. The errors, extending over several years, were "leftist" ones. In their fury at the recent betrayal of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians in 1927 and the continuing White Terror, some people in the Communist Party forgot that the nature of the Chinese revolution had not changed, that imperialism and feudalism were still the targets. This approach led them to adopt measures in the base areas against the rich peasants, small private capital and so on, which were suitable only for the stage of socialist revolution, after the conquest of power throughout the nation, and some not even then. They took a negative, sectarian attitude toward united action with non-Communist groups in the country as a whole, thus unnecessarily isolating the revolutionary vanguard. They did not realize the difference between the capitulationist "united front" of a Chen Duxiu, who had disarmed the masses to appease the bourgeoisie, a course which had resulted inevitably in defeat, and a united front backing and serving the armed struggle by the forces of the worker-peasant alliance led by the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Party, which was essential to victory.

Impatient with the slow work of building up new strength in the countryside, the "leftists" also wanted to throw the freshly formed Red Army prematurely against the cities. They woefully underestimated the power of the new imperialist-Chiang Kai-shek alliance there. This led not only to serious

military losses but also to the decimation of Party strength and the organized working class in the industrial centers, where premature uprisings were launched only to fail.

Both the Right deviationists of the Chen Duxiu type and the "Left" deviationists who succeeded him in leadership (Qu Qiubai and Li Lisan in 1927-30 and Wang Ming in 1931-34) had this in common: they lacked faith in the revolutionary potential of the majority of the people of China, the peasants. In their surface response to events they seemed poles apart. Chen feared to fight and trusted in reform and in top-level political maneuvers. Qu and Li by contrast, often wanted to fight everyone at once, including possible allies, and the possible enemies of tomorrow as well as the real ones of today. Nonetheless, the two trends were twins in their petty-bourgeois individualism and subjectivism, bringing defeats to the revolution wherever followed. Lenin long ago pointed out just such a similarity in Russia's early revolutionary movement between the professorial "legal Marxists" and trade-unionist proponents of purely economic struggles on the one hand and the seemingly "ultra revolutionary" terrorists, on the other, including the fact that today's terrorist often became tomorrow's reformist.

In China, in the light of her own concrete conditions, the line that was to bring victory in the revolution was gradually developed and tested in struggle against both Right capitulationism and "Left" adventurism. It was the line of people's war, in which the proletariat led the peasantry and which, persisting in varying forms for more than 20 years came more and more to be governed by the following principle, stated by Mao Zedong:

Since China's key cities have long been occupied by the powerful imperialists and their reactionary Chinese allies, it is imperative for the revolutionary ranks to turn the backward villages into advanced, consolidated base areas, into great military, political, economic and cultural bastions of the revolution from which to fight their vicious enemies who are using the cities for attacks on the rural districts, and in this way gradually to achieve the complete victory of the revolution through pro-

tracted fighting; it is imperative for them to do so if they do not wish to compromise with imperialism and its lackeys but are determined to fight on, and if they intend to build up and temper their forces, and avoid decisive battles with a powerful enemy while their own strength is inadequate. *

On the foundation of the militant alliance between the working class and the vast peasantry, which followed the lead of the working class, the policy of the united front was further developed and applied. Mao Zedong has written on this subject:

Every Communist ought to know that, taken as a whole, the Chinese revolutionary movement led by the Communist Party embraces the two stages, i.e., the democratic and the socialist revolutions, which are two essentially different revolutionary processes, and that the second process can be carried through only after the first had been completed.**

Obviously, the revolution was still in the first stage. Hence, the Party began to seek ways of cooperation with all anti-imperialist and anti-feudal groupings, and with all other possible allies against the main enemy of the period. In the years when Japanese aggression became the chief menace to China's national existence and also to the interests of other imperialist powers in the Pacific, this approach was to be adopted even toward the part of the Chinese big bourgeoisie (Chiang and his clique) tied to the apron strings of the United States and Britain and therefore opposed to Japan.

On the one hand, concessions in social policy were made when necessary. On the other, repetition of the catastrophe of 1927 was guarded against. This was ensured because the revolutionary forces had succeeded in building up

* See "A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire" (Jan. 5, 1930) in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Beijing, English ed.) Vol. I, p. 117.

** "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, English edition, Beijing, Vol. II, 1965, pp.330-331.

their own state power, army and bases which were the core and most active sector of every form of the united front. Thenceforth no group that wanted to desert such a united front was able to isolate the Chinese Communist Party. Such deserters could only isolate themselves from the sentiments and support of the people.

All this was to be shown in the future. In the meantime, the reactionary Kuomintang regime was proving its complete inability to solve any of China's problems, and exposing its true nature at every turn.

Chiang Kai-shek had promised to "unify the country," but he was soon fighting with other new militarists. He had described himself as "opposed to the unequal treaties," but he did nothing against them. Instead, at the end of 1927, his troops murdered the staff of the Guangzhou Consulate of the U. S. S.R., the only foreign nation that had abrogated those treaties. This happened at the same time as the old-style warlord Zhang Zuolin, then still in power in Beijing, in connivance with the diplomatic corps of the western powers and Japan, raided the Soviet Embassy in the technically immune "Legation Quarter." Chiang Kai-shek's Anglo-American backers were just as concerned as Zhang Zuolin's Japanese patrons to destroy Sino-Soviet contacts on any level.

The imperialists, however, were competing just as fiercely among themselves, as were the new warlords. The Japanese did not at all relish the idea of the American and British favorite, Chiang Kai-shek, taking over their sphere of penetration in North China. In 1928, they threw their own troops across the path of his armies in Shandong province, shot down his soldiers and killed the emissaries he sent to negotiate. But the "nationalist" Chiang neither fought against this unprecedentedly crude intrusion nor appealed to the Chinese people for support. Instead he travelled to Tokyo humbly to explain to the military-fascist camarilla there that they were mistaken in regarding him as in any way dangerous to their interests. In this task, he had the patronage of Mitsuru Toyama, head of the ultra-reactionary Black Dragon Society, the most ardent advocate of Japanese invasion of Manchuria, Mongolia and the Soviet Far East.

The enterprise in which Chiang was willing to serve all masters impartially was soon made clear. After the strangling of the Chinese revolution of 1925-27, the last of the wave that followed the October Revolution of 1917 in both Europe and Asia, a concerted effort was undertaken to prepare an inter-imperialist intervention against the U. S. S. R. In 1929, Chinese troops in Manchuria (Northeast China) were used to violate the Soviet frontier and to seize the Russian-built Chinese Eastern Railway. This line, under Czarism, had been the center of an extraterritorial zone administered and garrisoned by Russia, much as the Panama Canal Zone was by the United States or the Suez Canal Zone by Britain — all the imperialists had developed the same device. After the October Revolution, the line had been placed under the joint control of the western powers and Japan.* Besides helping themselves to some of collapsed Czarism's holdings in China, they wanted to use the railway as a base to strike back at the new proletarian power in Russia led by Lenin. In 1924, after these efforts failed, an agreement was signed by Soviet Russia and the then Chinese government in Beijing under which the railway remained a commercial property of the U. S.S.R., but with all extraterritorial privileges abolished and sovereignty over the "zone" restored to China. The seizure of the line in 1929, accompanied by the arrest of hundreds of Soviet railwaymen and cross-border raids, took place just as the Soviet Union was beginning its first Five-Year Plan of industrialization and the collectivization of its agriculture. It was an international reactionary destabilizing operation against socialism accompanied by spurious propaganda about "Red aggression against China," and the like.

The Chinese Communist Party, standing firmly on proletarian internationalism, did its class and patriotic duty in boldly denouncing to the

* At first, Japan tried to seize the railway alone, then it came to be administered by the "Inter-Allied Railway Commission" headed by John W. Stevens of the United States. During that period it served as a feeder to both the U.S. and the Japanese troops intervening in Siberia, as well as to Russian Whiteguard bands supported by the powers. Afterwards, Whiteguard military forces were kept in being in China's Northeast, some as part of local warlord armies, right up to the 1929 conflict in which they were used for border forays as well as in pitched battles. Their disbandment was part of the settlement that followed.

Chinese people the attempt to stampede them into a war with their friend, the world's only worker-peasant state, for the benefit of their enemies, the imperialists and reactionaries.

The Soviet Red Army acted quickly to re-establish the previous situation, imposing no occupation, indemnities or other penalties on China. Thus the U. S.S.R. of that time, as behooved a socialist state, demonstrated to the Chinese people that it would not make them suffer for the actions of their reactionary rulers. At the same time it showed that it would not permit imperialist hirelings to kick it around.

Two years afterwards, the Chinese people reaped bitter fruits of Chiang's betrayal of the revolution in 1927, and lending of China's armed forces to the purposes of international and domestic reaction in 1929. On September 18, 1931, Japan, taking advantage of the preoccupation of the western powers with the world economic crisis just as she had taken advantage of their preoccupation with the European hostilities in World War I, invaded and occupied Northeast China. The country's most industrially developed provinces, with 40 million people, were torn away. Even the feudal monarchy had gone to war with less provocation. But Chiang did not send a single soldier to the front to support the resistance put up by local troops... on the contrary, he forbade them to resist. For most of the next 14 years, right up to Japan's defeat in 1945, the battle against the invaders in this area was waged only by the people's guerilla forces among whom the Communist Party gained the leadership.

The only "anti-Japanese" gesture Chiang undertook at the time was to appeal to the League of Nations, which set up the so-called Lytton Commission to investigate. The report the Commission ultimately prepared on this case of flagrant aggression can be judged from its sage conclusion that "the issues involved in this conflict are not as simple as they are often represented to be." The reason for this Olympian restraint was that the western powers, while they did not like Japan grabbing anything for herself, did not mind so much if it was done at the expense of China — particularly if the seizures were near the Soviet border and offered hope of diverting further Japanese adven-

tures in that direction.

When the Japanese attacked Shanghai itself in January 1932, Chiang gave no aid to the 19th Route Army which fought them there with outstanding heroism. He preferred to allow this force, which was not under the direct command of his own henchmen, to be smashed by the enemy. At the end of the Shanghai struggle, he accepted a humiliating local truce. The intermediary who arranged the truce was Count Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law and later Fascist Italy's Foreign Minister, who was then the Italian Consul-General in Shanghai.

Inside the country Chiang's chief concern, and that of the imperialists despite their growing conflicts on a world scale, was to encompass the destruction of the Chinese Red Army. But this army was now waging a people's mobile and guerilla war in the deep hinterland, away from the imperialist bastions in the cities, and from the railways and main rivers. Wherever it went it practiced its famous code of conduct that had been drawn up by Mao Zedong.* Wherever it went it enabled the peasants to take back the land from the feudal landlords and organize their own organs of power. Wherever it went it acted not only as a military force but as the educator and organizer of the people. Between 1930 and 1934 it utterly defeated four "anti-Communist campaigns" into which Chiang threw millions of his men. It succeeded not only in destroying large Kuomintang units but in securing the defection of tens of thousands of Chiang's soldiers, who were also from the peasantry, and of some patriotic officers.

The Red Army's military effectiveness, close links with the people and disintegrative effect on the enemy rank-and-file were guaranteed by its pervasive system of political work. This ensured the conformity of its actions to the principles for which it fought. Especially important were the Party group in every squad and Party branch in each company, at the most basic levels. Superior Party organizations were instituted in battalions, regiments and on up. As Mao Zedong later summarized it, "Our principle is

* In "Problems of War and Strategy." 1938 (*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Beijing, English ed., Vol. II, 1965, p.234.)

that the Party commands the gun and the gun must never command the Party.”* Command by bullying, characteristic of the old-type armies was not allowed. The relationship between officers and men, it was stressed, was one between class brothers. Combined with obedience to orders, there was military democracy (discussion of operations with the rank and file both when planned and when reviewed afterwards) and economic democracy (soldiers were involved in running each company mess and checked on unit accounts). The democracy was not one “for its own sake.” It was to make the Red Army an active and united fighting force in which the initiative and will of all members was mobilized to achieve its aim, the victory of China’s revolution.

For all these reasons, the Red Army proved to have strength many times in excess of its numbers.

Arms with which the imperialists had plentifully supplied Chiang passed over into its hands. The German Fascist officers whom Chiang had invited as its advisers, including the notorious General Von Seeckt who organized the semi-underground revival of the German armed forces after the First World War and General Von Falkenhausen, later Hitler’s military governor of Belgium, turned out to be quite incapable, in several campaigns, of thinking up ways to destroy the forces of the Chinese Communist Party. Chiang’s air force, organized and trained by such American officers as Claire Chennault and an Italian Fascist air mission headed by General Lordi, bombed hundreds of villages and killed large numbers of peasants — but it proved of little military value against a people’s war.

So the Kuomintang failed repeatedly to wipe out the Chinese Red Army. On the other hand, the Chinese Red Army was still not sufficiently strong to

* This code was first laid down in 1928. It was subsequently re-issued many times, with the same essential content but minor alterations in order and wording, to govern the behavior not only of the Chinese Red Army but of its successors in later wars. As promulgated for the People’s Liberation Army in 1947 it read: The Three Main Rules: 1. Obey orders in all your actions. 2. Don’t take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses. 3. Turn in everything captured. The Eight Points: 1. Speak politely. 2. Pay fairly for what you buy. 3. Return everything you borrow. 4. Pay for anything you damage. 5. Don’t hit or swear at people. 6. Don’t damage crops. 7. Don’t take liberties with women. 8. Don’t ill-treat captives.

attack the cities or main communications, and the revolutionary areas were kept in a state of blockade.

On the international arena, the Rome-Berlin Axis was then taking shape. Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy were using Chiang's civil war against the people to establish their influence in China in preparation for their later bid for world power. The Germans penetrated deeply into the fabric of the Kuomintang army and police force: the Nazi Captain Walter Stennes, for example, became commander of Chiang's bodyguard and chief of his personal intelligence. Italian money founded the Sino-Italian Aeronautic Works. A former Italian Minister of Finance, Alberto de Stefani, became economic adviser to Chiang, and worked out a plan for buying into the biggest Chinese inland shipping enterprise, the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company. A high official of Mussolini's regime was quoted as describing such a hold on the Chinese merchant fleet as a way "to secure political and possible territorial concessions."* The Italian air installations were regarded as bases for the seizure of Jiangxi and Fujian provinces in any future dismemberment of China.

Chiang's complete indifference to the interests of his country can be seen from his attitude to these Axis intrigues. He retained his advisers from Fascist Germany and Italy even after these countries had entered into the closest collaboration with Japan which was actually invading China. He kept them even when it became clear that Nazi and Fascist officers in the most sensitive military positions were gathering intelligence which could be passed over to the Japanese.

As for the United States and Britain, despite the fact that Japan was excluding their trade from Manchuria, and had even boldly struck at their own sphere of supremacy in Shanghai, they did little or nothing to stop her encroachment.

The United States proclaimed that it expected the "Open Door" to be respected. To uphold its role as "China's friend," it also verbally denounced Tokyo's action. But in practice it increased its exports of oil and scrap iron to

* Tamagna, Frank L., *Italy's Interests and Policies in the Far East*, New York, 1940.

Japan. These exports provided the essential materials without which Japan's war machine could not be built up.

The British government of the time felt that its immediate losses were compensated by the "service" Japan was performing in "teaching the Chinese their place." Its Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, worked hard to prevent League of Nations action against Japanese aggression, and accompanied his hypocritical expressions of sympathy for China with endless qualifications in extenuation of the Japanese attack. His efforts were so blatant that Matsuoka, the Japanese delegate to the League, declared afterwards that he could not have argued the Japanese case better himself! L.S. Amery, a member of the Cabinet, gave voice to the typical Tory attitude: "Who is there to say that Japan ought not to have acted with the object of... defending herself against... a vigorous Chinese nationalism?* Our whole policy in India, our whole policy in Egypt, stands condemned if we condemn Japan."

The dominant groups in both Britain and America still reasoned that Japan could not digest her conquests in China economically without aid from Wall Street and London bankers, who would then reap profits. Always at the back of their minds was the idea that Japan could be steered into a war with the U.S.S.R. with which her forces now had a long frontier in Manchuria.

The same Amery wrote: "While it is no part of our policy, or of American policy, to foster a quarrel between Japan and Soviet Russia, it would be no concern of ours, if such a quarrel developed into war, to prevent Japanese expansion in Eastern Siberia."** The U.S. establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, and the American and British efforts to repair Chiang Kai-shek's finances, were in the nature of re-insurance. Moreover, the financial strengthening of Chiang has the more immediate effect of enabling him to carry on his anti-popular civil war with greater vigor.

In the international arena, the only consistent voice against Japanese and all other fascist aggression was that of the Soviet Union. The vigorous Soviet defense of China's rights made it impossible for the Kuomintang to

* *Ibid.*

** Amery, L.S., *The Forward View*, London, 1935.

further justify its own lack of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union to its own people. At the end of 1932 embassies were exchanged between Moscow and Nanjing.

In the meantime, the Kuomintang waged the civil war with ever-increasing ferocity, while continuing to make concessions to the Japanese. But the demand for resistance to Japan began to mount everywhere. In 1931 and 1932 there were student demonstrations in the university cities, which did not cease despite suppression and arrests. Dissatisfaction with Chiang's policies also spread widely in the army. The "Christian General" Feng Yuxiang, with other officers including General Ji Hongchang, a member of the Communist Party, fought the Japanese in the then Chahar province, with a mixed population of the Han and Mongolian nationalities. This resistance, however, was short-lived, because Chiang Kai-shek not only did not support it but took all steps to knife it in the back. General Ji Hongchang, after being arrested by the police of the French Concession in Tianjin, was handed to the Kuomintang and shot.

In 1933, the 19th Route Army, which had held off the Japanese in Shanghai, refused to fight the Red Army against which it was subsequently sent. For a short period, it maintained an anti-Chiang, anti-Japanese government at Fuzhou.

In October 1934, as a result of "leftist" political errors (the Wang Ming line) which alienated the more prosperous peasants and sections of the petty bourgeoisie, and prematurely shifted the stress from the previous correct policy of mobile and guerilla warfare to one of positional warfare, the Red Army was compelled, under tremendous enemy pressure, to leave its central base in Jiangxi and Fujian provinces. Together with units from other areas, it started on the stupendous Long March to the Northwest. This campaign lasted a year and covered over 8,000 miles. It was an epic feat unparalleled in the history of war. Daily battles, and the persistence of some policy errors, took a terrible toll of the forces. Before the beginning of the Long March, the Red Army in all bases had grown to some 300,000 men. At the end, it numbered only 30,000. For any other force, or a force continuing to be badly led, this would have presaged the end of its existence.

The Chinese Red Army, and Communist Party leadership, however, was able to turn its campaign from defeat to a tremendous military and political victory. The army, on its route, passed through 11 provinces with 200 million inhabitants, showing them an example of devoted and effective struggle in the people's behalf. The troops that ultimately fought their way to Northwest China were the tested, steeled flower of the revolutionary forces. In the fire of the Long March, the "Left" tendencies that had cost the revolutionary cause very dearly in the preceding years were finally overcome — at the famous Zunyi Conference of 1935 which marked a turning point in the work of the whole Party. Account was taken of the fact that whenever the policies developed by Mao Zedong had been followed, the revolutionary bases and Red Army had grown and sprung up in new places, while whenever the "Leftists" took over even old and strong bases and Red Army units had suffered defeat and destruction. Many of the former adherents of "Left" views, by this time, had come to see what helped and what harmed the revolution. At Zunyi, the leadership of Mao Zedong in the Party was firmly established. From then on, and until China's liberation, no opportunist line, Right or "Left" could assume dominance in it, and victories, both political and military, followed one upon the other.

The Long March was a classic example of how revolutionaries can convert setbacks, inevitable in the course of struggle, into great triumphs.

Some people saw only the fact that the march was forced on the Red Army by failure to hold the old base, and that it lost nine-tenths of its effectives in that great testing time. Such for example was Zhang Guotao, a former "Left" sectarian turned Rightist, who like all opportunists of both brands really lacked faith in the people and the revolution. Frightened by the difficulties already encountered and those still ahead, he abandoned the line of advance to the anti-Japanese fronts and, attempting to split both the Party and the army, led away a section of the forces in the opposite direction. First, he tried to hole up in the national minority areas of Sichuan. Then he gambled on a breakthrough into Xinjiang, for what he conceived to be maximum safety as far from the Japanese invaders and as near the friendly Soviet border as he could get. On

the way, he lost a large part of the Fourth Red Army in meaningless battles, after which the remainder realized that they had been fooled and fought their way back to rejoin the main forces. Typically, Zhang's near-sighted adventurism turned into equally near-sighted panic.* By contrast Mao Zedong used a correct overall analysis of the situation as a guide to confident action whatever the apparent odds.

"In approaching a problem a Marxist should see the whole as well as the parts," he wrote in criticism of the pessimists. "A frog in a well says, 'The sky is no bigger than the mouth of the well.' That is untrue... If it said, 'A part of the sky is the size of the mouth of a well,' that would be true" What was the whole of the sky? That the revolution had made a mighty advance. Mao Zedong wrote magnificently of the meaning of the Long March in 1935, soon after its end:

The Long March is a manifesto. It has proclaimed to the world that the Red Army is an army of heroes, while the imperialists and their running dogs, Chiang Kai-shek and his like, are impotent. It has proclaimed their utter failure to encircle, pursue, obstruct and intercept us. The Long March is also a propaganda force. It has announced to some 200 million people in eleven provinces that the road of the Red Army is their only road to liberation. Without the Long March, how could the broad masses have learned so quickly about the existence of the great truth which the Red Army embodies? The Long March is also a seeding machine. In the eleven provinces it has sown many seeds, which will sprout, leaf, blossom, and bear fruit, and will yield a harvest in the future. In a word,

* Later, along with criticism, Mao Zedong and the Party made efforts to help Zhang Guotao avoid further errors and retained him in responsible positions. But he proved incapable of change. After once more advocating a "Left" adventurist course, he finally betrayed the revolution in 1938, deserting to join Chiang Kai-shek and his fascist secret police. Significantly, this man who only three years earlier had been able to mislead a whole army finally slunk away alone, without a single follower — even his personal orderly and bodyguard did not go with him. After the liberation he prostituted himself to the imperialists, serving as a "living source" for their intelligence agencies and for the establishment "Pekinologists."

the Long March has ended with victory for us and defeat for the enemy. Who brought the Long March to victory? The Communist Party. Without the Communist Party, a long march of this kind would have been inconceivable. The Chinese Communist Party, its leadership, its cadres and its members fear no difficulties or hardships. Whoever questions our ability to lead the revolutionary war will fall into the morass of opportunism.*

The Red Army came to its new base strong in spirit and experience. It defeated a new punitive expedition sent against it by Chiang Kai-shek. The people throughout China began to see in it the kind of invincible, unbreakable force that was needed to drive out the Japanese invaders who were menacing China's very existence as a nation. On December 9, 1935, renewed Japanese encroachments in North China were met by a great demonstration of the university students in Beijing. These strikes sparked a nationwide movement under the slogan: "Stop the civil war! Unite to resist Japan!"

A short time earlier, in harmony with the growth of the united front of struggle against fascism all over the world, Mao Zedong had declared that the task of the Party was "to integrate the activities of the Red Army with all the activities of the workers, peasants, students, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie of the whole country and to form out of this integration a united national revolutionary front." The Party also replaced the slogan of a Workers' and Peasants' Republic, as the government of China after the victory of the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist revolution, with that of a People's Republic, in which the national bourgeoisie would be one of the classes enjoying legality and a share in political life. This accorded with the nature of the revolution. It did not change the principle of proletarian leadership of the united front for national liberation. Neither did it change the principle of the worker-peasant alliance as the fundamental and primary basis for all wider

* "On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism," December 27, 1935 (*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Beijing, English ed., Vol. I, 1965, p. 160.)

alliances. It was designed to facilitate not only the successful accomplishment of the current national democratic stage of the Chinese revolution but also the transition to its future socialist stage.

To the Kuomintang military forces, the Chinese Red Army issued a message proposing negotiations for internal peace and a concerted war against Japanese imperialism. It met the units Chiang Kai-shek sent against it not only with resolute combat but also with the cry, "Chinese must not fight Chinese! Resist Japan!"

This corresponded to the facts and feelings in China in the new situation. It had an irresistible effect. At the end of 1936 the northwestern army of General Yang Hucheng, uniting with the northeastern troops of "the Young Marshal" Zhang Xueliang who were particularly anxious to drive the Japanese out of their occupied home provinces, concluded a local truce with the Red Army against which they had been sent. In December, Chiang Kai-shek flew to Xi'an in Shaanxi province, to stir their troops into resuming the offensive. But instead of obeying his orders, they placed him under arrest. While in confinement, Chiang was visited by Zhou Enlai. Seeing the representative of the Communist Party, so many thousands of whose members he had killed, Chiang thought his last moment had come.

The Communist Party, however, advised Chiang's insurgent subordinates, who wanted to publicly try and condemn him as a traitor, against any such course. It saw that the new and bigger civil war that would inevitably follow would play into the hands of Japan.* By promoting a whole series of developments, including Chiang's release, to secure internal peace and stimulate anti-Japanese struggle, it proved to the whole people that it was the best architect of the unity of all sections in defense of the nation.

The Party saw clearly that Chiang Kai-shek, pressed by the rising popu-

* Zhang Guotao's last adventurist fling came at this point. He insisted that the Party respond to the Xi'an Incident not by promoting the anti-Japanese united front but by attacking the Kuomintang's key Yellow River stronghold of Tongguan, thus rekindling full scale civil war. From this final "Left" wing of his pendulum to his ultra-Right one-man capitulation to the Kuomintang, less than two years were to pass.

lar demand for anti-Japanese resistance, would not much longer be able to use his troops for civil war. It estimated that with Japan broadening her attack, he would have to fight her, however unwillingly and waveringly, for his own existence. It estimated, too, that Chiang's U.S.-British masters, whose positions in China were also threatened by the Tokyo militarists, would give a certain amount of backing to any decision to resist, if only to have a bargaining counter in some new inter-imperialist deal with Japan later, and in the best case end up allied with China to fight Japan. To make use of all the positive potentialities of the situation, while paralyzing the negative ones, it was necessary to mobilize, with the utmost breadth and militancy, the real makers of history, the masses of the people. What was needed was a people's war against Japanese aggression and a nationwide united front to support and serve the armed struggle.

XVI

WAR OF RESISTANCE AGAINST JAPANESE IMPERIALISM (1937-1945)

This proved a correct analysis. On July 7, 1937, the Japanese army launched its attack on Lugouqiao ("Marco Polo Bridge"). After some days of fierce fighting, it occupied nearby Beijing. On August 13, Japanese naval and land forces began a combined assault on Shanghai, where Chinese troops held them off for three months.

Breaking with the tradition of semi-colonial domination of China, Tokyo now tried to reduce China to a complete colony. The Chinese people were faced with the biggest national crisis in their history.

Within China, the civil war ceased and the Kuomintang and Communist Party reached an agreement. The Red Army received the designation of the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies. In the revolutionary bases under its leadership, the Communist Party brought other united front groups into participation in local councils and governments. The policy of confiscating landlord estates for the benefit of the peasantry was changed to one of reducing rents and interest. The eight-year war for national survival, in which all armies, parties and groups were tested, now began.

In the first stage of the hostilities, i.e. until the fall of Wuhan and Guangzhou in October 1938, the Kuomintang put up a certain amount of resistance, and some of the troops under its command fought tenaciously and well. But even at this period, Chiang's tactics — determined by his class

character and his ties to imperialism — were passive, opportunist and treacherous.

Internally, he attempted the impossible task of facing the enemy with only one part of his armies, keeping the bulk in reserve against the people and jealously preventing every form of popular organization and initiative in the struggle. And even in this early phase he entered into negotiations with the Japanese on two occasions. The first was through the Germans, on the eve of Japan's occupation of his capital, Nanjing, in 1937. The second was in 1938, through his own emissaries.

Internationally, Chiang kept looking over his shoulder at the League of Nations and his Anglo-American masters, hoping that they would pull him out of the mess. He did not use the closer relations the Soviet Union established with his government, and the aid it gave to China, as a means of strengthening China's own resistance. Instead he hoped to embroil the U.S.S.R. itself in a war with Japan, enabling him to bargain once more with the foe and even to switch sides.

So, even when the Chinese people united to fight for survival, and acknowledged him as head of state, Chiang was guided by his reactionary class stand and by mental habits acquired in his youth as a commodity-exchange speculator in Shanghai. He thought and acted only in the narrow interests of his clique. While the soldiers and people fought and died for their country, he remained a servant and stooge of foreign interests and policies. The most striking expression of this is that, for four and a half years after the Japanese attack on China in 1937, Chiang did not declare war on Japan. But it took him only two days to do so after Japan attacked the United States and Britain in December 1941.

From early 1939 onwards, Chiang did practically no fighting against the Japanese. He preferred to let them concentrate their forces against the people's armies led by the Communist Party, which operated mainly in the enemy's rear. In the meantime he himself renewed anti-Communist attacks and provocations.

These internal maneuvers had their counterpart in Chiang's foreign policy. After the outbreak of the European war brought temporary successes to the

Axis, he proved that he was just as ready to double-cross Britain and America, if need be, as he was to betray his own people. Following the fall of France, he resumed direct secret touch on the highest level with Japan. At the height of the war, Tokyo's Foreign Minister Matsuoka spoke to his Nazi counterpart, Von Ribbentrop, of "Chiang Kai-shek, with whom he was in personal contact, who knew him and trusted him."*

After Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, the Kuomintang planned a large-scale resumption of civil war. The signal for the all-out attack on the areas led by the Communist Party was to be the Nazi capture of Moscow. Afterwards, some of the leading elements of the Kuomintang intended to adhere to the Axis. But like so many of the dreams of reactionaries throughout the world, this one was punctured, along with Hitler's offensive, by the heroic efforts of the Soviet people and army led by Stalin. The whole episode demonstrated once more how closely the fortunes of the world's first socialist state were bound up with the interests of the Chinese people — as of all others in the world-wide life and death struggle against Fascism.

When the United States entered the war in December 1941, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Chiang declared war on Japan and the other Axis powers. Now the Kuomintang plan was to sit tight until it was rescued both from Japanese appetites and from its own people by America, which it regarded as invincible. But in 1942-43 Japan gained a series of big victories over the Anglo-American forces in the Pacific. Chiang Kai-shek's government at once resumed undercover contact with Tokyo, using open traitors as well as the Nazi Waiter Stennes. At one point it actually allowed an important Japanese secret service official, Kuroda, to reside under its protection in China's wartime capital, Chongqing.**

* Document Aufz. RAM 1941, March 29, 1941 of the German Foreign Ministry, captured and published by the U.S. government.

** All this was an open secret in Chongqing at the time, though it was not frankly stated in "respectable" print until many, many years later. For instance the wartime U.S. diplomat O. Edmund Clubb writes in his autobiographical *The Witness and I* (New York, 1975) of serving in "grimy, bomb-shattered... Chongqing, with its shops well stocked with goods from Japan's puppet government in Nanking." The people got the brunt of Japan's bombs. Corrupt officials consumed the Japanese goods and intrigued with the enemy.

In this phase, Chiang Kai-shek gave the green light to 57 of his generals to go over to the Japanese with 500,000 troops so that, paid and equipped by Japan, they could fight against the Communist-led armies in North and Central China. His reckoning was simple. If the Axis won, these troops would form a bridge for his own change of sides. If the Allies won, they would be useful too. Having returned, under the Japanese flag, to occupied areas from which the regular Kuomintang armies had been driven, they would be in ideal positions for the subsequent civil war.

In the next phase, 1944-45, the naval and air power of Japan waned. Her shipping lines became powerless against American attacks. Her land forces, therefore, violated the unwritten truce with the Kuomintang areas. They attacked them again, in order to complete a line of communications by rail from Manchuria to the Indo-China border.

Chiang put up no defense. Instead he used the arms he had obtained from the United States, and his crack units trained by American officers, to blockade and in some cases attack areas held by the people's forces. To the Japanese fronts he sent not fighting troops but negotiators.

Every one of these facts has since been thoroughly documented, exposed and proved. Many, indeed, were made known at the time, not only by indignant Chinese patriots but also by some American officers and diplomats, among them General Stilwell,* commander of the U.S. forces in the China-Burma-India theater of war until removed in 1944. These men, though they too wanted to consolidate wartime and post-war U.S. pro-eminence in China, wanted more active struggle against the Axis. Many of them were themselves unaware of the full perfidy of the "grand strategy" of Chiang-Japanese-American collaboration against the Chinese people, already being prepared for the postwar years. Some resisted it when it came into the open, and later paid the

* For an account of these matters by Stilwell himself, see *The Stilwell Papers*, ed. by T.H. White, New York, 1948; by a member of his wartime staff, *Lost Chance in China, the World War II Despatches of John S. Service*, New York, 1974; and by a U.S. historian, using some subsequently revealed material, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-45*, Barbara W. Tuchman, New York, 1971.

penalty by being hounded out of American official life or, like Stilwell himself, to unhappy death.

It was in this situation that Mao Zedong wrote:

We oppose the U.S. government's policy of supporting... Chiang Kai-shek against the Communists. But we must draw a distinction, firstly, between the people of the United States and their government and secondly, between the policy-makers and their subordinates. *

But the real history of China and the Far East was not being made by Chiang, the Japanese or the American government and military. The future was being forged by the Chinese people and their revolutionary leadership. In these same years, they grew so much in strength, experience and political foresight, that they could no longer be defeated or manoeuvred out of the fruits of their struggle — as they had been in 1927.

While the ruling Kuomintang clique was betraying not only the nation as a whole but the soldiers in its own armies, and amassing fabulous wealth by robbing the people in its own areas, the forces led by the Communist Party held high the banner of the people's national liberation war. In ceaseless battles against the invaders, they multiplied in numbers and influence. The small northwestern town of Yan'an, where Mao Zedong and the Communist Party Central Committee were quartered, became the lodestar for all that was healthy, forward-looking and patriotic in China. Here was the mighty smithy in which the future leaders of the whole country were shaped and educated.

During the War of Resistance Against Japanese Imperialism, the Communist Party came to be recognized, by all strata of Chinese society in which love of the homeland was not dead, as the Party of the Nation. And it could not be otherwise, for the working people whose class interests it upheld were, as

* "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains" (Excerpt from the Concluding Address to the Seventh National Congress of the Communist Party of China, June 11, 1945), *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, English ed., Beijing, Vol. III, 1965, p. 322.

everywhere, the vast majority, the main body, of the nation. The Party's membership grew from some 40,000 in 1937 to 1,200,000 in 1945.

The widespread mobile and guerilla warfare, waged in every corner of the nominally Japanese-occupied areas under the Party's guidance, awoke hundreds of millions to hope, confidence and decisive action, it produced innumerable talented military and political leaders from the ranks of the masses, creating an armed force of unprecedented proportions, which was truly "the Fist of the People." At the end of the heroic Long March in 1935, the Chinese Red Army had been reduced to only 30,000 men. By 1945 the people's army had grown, in constant battles, to 910,000 with more than 2,500,000 armed auxiliaries in the people's militia.

Vast liberated areas were formed in all places where the people's forces wrested back territory from the Japanese invaders, from the frozen north to the sub-tropical southern island of Hainan. The leadership in these areas was exercised by the party of the Chinese working class. The peasants, who formed the overwhelming majority of their population, gained not only full political rights but great economic amelioration in the shape of sharp reductions in rents and interest (to preserve the anti-Japanese unity of all possible sections of the population, redistribution of land was not then undertaken). Patriotic elements of all classes were represented in their administration under which political, economic and cultural policy alike served the needs of the people and the national war.

In 1937, the Communist Party had only one revolutionary base, in a poor and drought-stricken corner of the Northwest, with a population of 1.5 million. By April 1945, five months before Japan's surrender, the Liberated Areas contained 95 million people with their own well-organized local administration. These areas were the seedbed, and prototype of the People's Republic of China today.

After the first two years of the eight-year war, the Kuomintang "front" was dormant. The Liberated Areas bore the brunt of constant and bitter armed struggle with over 60 per cent of all the Japanese troops in China. They also faced 95 per cent of the Chinese turncoat troops under Japanese command

(including those who had gone over to the enemy with Chiang Kai-shek's approval).

Throughout this time, the Kuomintang subjected the Liberated Areas to military and economic embargo. It cut them off from all sources of supply in its own rear areas. It gave them no share of the supplies that came in from America and the Soviet Union for the purpose of the anti-Japanese war. Instead, it diverted these supplies to equip the forces blockading the Liberated Areas, so that these troops became the best-equipped in the whole Kuomintang army. It also directly attacked the people's forces on many occasions. The most notorious was the treacherous ambushing and massacre of the headquarters column of the Communist-led New Fourth Army early in 1941.

The popular forces fought the immeasurably better-armed Japanese by constant guerilla and mobile actions. They refrained from attacking the large and well-entrenched enemy garrisons in the cities, but smashed every enemy attempt to clamp control on the countryside. At the same time the turncoat forces, composed largely of drafted Chinese peasants, were defeated or neutralized by a variety of methods: military and political. Altogether, in the course of the people's war, over 960,000 casualties were inflicted on the enemy by the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies, which also captured very large amounts of equipment, and the revolutionary countryside encircled the cities.

Toward the Kuomintang, a flexible policy of "unity and struggle" was adopted. Militarily, its attacks were often beaten back "tit for tat," but every care was taken to wage such conflicts "with a just reason, with advantage and with restraint," and not to allow clashes to escalate into a large-scale civil war which would play into the hands of the Japanese and the extreme reactionaries. Politically, the Communist Party exposed each Kuomintang provocation to the people of the entire country, calling on them to consolidate and enforce the anti-Japanese united front. It also took care to make the facts known to democratic opinion abroad. Thus it helped to establish the prestige of the Left forces and expand their ranks, to win over the middle and to expose and isolate the treacherous Right.

No military action was taken to break the Kuomintang's economic

blockade. Instead, the Liberated Areas gave a striking demonstration of the way all the resources of the nation should and could have been mobilized. They successfully enlisted the people of the rural hinterland in an organized upsurge of agriculture and small-scale (largely handicraft) industrial production. On the base of the village and small-town economy alone (the Liberated Areas had no cities or substantial towns at the time), they created not only the resources for war but also a better-fed, better-dressed army and population than could be seen in the Kuomintang areas — which had far more resources and enjoyed the benefits of foreign aid. The people's armies, when not actually in combat, produced a large part of their own sustenance, minimizing the burden on the peasants. Revolutionary self-reliance thus proved its indomitable power.*

In politics and outlook, a Party-wide “rectification movement” was launched and carried on for months and years. Its aim was self-education in Marxism-Leninism and in applying it to China's conditions. It was the opposite of scholastic. Through searching study and passionate discussion, it was a sum-up of the real experience of the whole Party and each unit and member — since all had a background, long or short, of actual struggle with its successes and failures. It deepened people's understanding of what was wrong with the “Left” and Right opportunist lines of the past — again with reference to a rich fund of practice already accumulated but needing to be examined and analyzed. More important, it enabled the participants to hammer out what was correct and promising, and what needed correction, in current action in the light of immediate tasks and preparation for those to follow.

As to basic approach and method, the targets of attack were “subjectivism, sectarianism and stereotyped Party writing.” Subjectivism took one of two

* Imperialists and their lackeys who later tried for over 20 years to “blockade” or “embargo” or “isolate” the revolutionary China of many hundreds of millions of people and to “contain” or “roll back” her influence should have remembered how this had proved impossible even with the split-up and beleaguered Liberated Areas of the late 1930's and early 1940's. And it is an index of the departure from socialist solidarity by Soviet leaders from Khrushchev's time on, that they came to use same embargoing tactics against the People's Republic of China, with, predictably, the same failure.

forms — *either* dogmatic theoretical study that never came down to earth (productive mainly of “Left” opportunism) *or* empirical concentration of whatever one was familiar with without considering the whole, which could only be illuminated by theory. Sectarianism meant attaching value only to one’s own group or branch of work, only the Party but not the non-Party masses, only the army but not civilians, only the young but not the old (or vice-versa). “Party stereotypes” referred to speaking and writing in dead phrases or empty rhetoric that did not really clarify the Party’s principles and views to the people but simply paraded strings of formulas for show and without real thought — a diversion from practice and not an aid to it, a form of exhibitionism (and in the worst cases of disguise) rather than a help to the masses by illuminating their road. The key documents of this movement were important speeches and writings by Mao Zedong — such as “Reform Our Study,” “Rectify the Party’s Style of Work,” “Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing” and “Our Study and the Current Situation.”*

It was this mind-freeing and activising movement, in the Party’s own view, that armed it with the united understanding that brought victory in action not only in the anti-Japanese war but also in the subsequent War of Liberation against Chiang Kai-shek and all imperialism. Based on its own experience in its own country, and in the international environment, the Chinese Communist Party became better able to judge independently what should and what should not be done in China’s revolution. It was the use of the Marxist “arrow” to strike the “target” of one’s own problems. In brief, it was a great forward step in the application of Marxism-Leninism to China in the form of Mao Zedong Thought. Though not naming names, it was an assertion by the Chinese Party of its unchallengeable right to determine its own policy. This was the course advocated by Mao Zedong and his supporters. Politically, it marked the defeat of the “Wang Ming line.” Wang Ming, with views formed in long years in Moscow, and little experience in China itself, suffered from all the tendencies criticized by the rectification movement — having swung be-

* All dated between 1941 and 1944 and contained in Vol. III of his *Selected Works*.

tween “Left” and Right with Comintern support.

This political and ideological “rectification” was interwoven with, and gave guidance to, the most arduous prosecution of the war, the production campaign for self-support of army and people in the revolutionary bases, and the social transformations appropriate to them at that stage of the revolution (the reduction of rent and interest and organization of elementary mutual aid in agriculture). Those who in much later periods tried to distort Mao Zedong Thought into a counter-posing of politics *versus* production or other real tasks had forgotten (or as in the case of the “Gang of Four” were deliberately distorting) its most important characteristic — the down-to-earth combination of revolutionary theory and practice.

Also in the first half of 1940’s, the revolutionary bases became the cultural center of the nation, radiating optimism and confidence (“a new kind of people,” said many visitors who had previously judged China only by the Kuomintang areas.) Mao Zedong’s “Talks at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art,” itself a major document of the rectification movement, stimulated and crystallized this freshening, vitalizing wind.

In all these ways, the Liberated Areas not only grew in military and economic strength but won the admiration of ever greater numbers of the Chinese people, including those in the Japanese-occupied and Chiang Kai-shek-controlled regions, where the Communist Party was underground or in semi-illegality and stringent censorship sought to suppress news of its achievements.

The Liberated Areas were a magnet of attraction not only for the people of China. Here Japanese Communists led a heroic group of their compatriots, including many former prisoners of war, in struggle against the enemy that was theirs as well as China’s — the Japanese imperialists. Here one met Korean, Vietnamese, Indonesian and other patriots. The young Indian physician Dwarkanath Kotnis died while serving the wounded in the front lines. The American revolutionary writer Agnes Smedley marched with the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies to gather material that aroused so many of her own countrymen to a realization of the world-wide glory and significance of the struggle of the common people of China. Here the Canadian surgeon and

Marxist-Leninist, Dr. Norman Bethune sacrificed his life to be commemorated by Mao Zedong as a model of proletarian internationalism and in general of communist conduct, for all to learn from.* Yan'an was a wellspring of the fighting friendship of the Chinese and foreign peoples against all alliances of Chinese and foreign reactionaries.

Such were the results of the two lines of action, that of the landlord-bourgeois Kuomintang on the one hand and that of the proletarian Communist Party on the other, in the war against Japan. One led to disintegration, reaction and constant defeats. The other, the line of people's war, laid the groundwork for the victory of the Chinese people over Japanese imperialism. More than this, it provided the foundation for the subsequent triumph of the century-old anti-feudal, anti-imperialist revolution in China against all foreign and domestic foes. It was indeed a mighty victory for all the progressive forces of the world, not only because it altered the entire global balance of forces but because it demonstrated, in unprecedentedly developed theory and practice, how to wage and win a people's war under one's own conditions.

Now let us look at certain phases of the international environment in which the Sino-Japanese War took place.

President Roosevelt of the United States, as early as 1937, had talked about "quarantine of the aggressors" and expressed sympathy for their victims. But in fact, U.S. monopolies had stepped up sales of oil, scrap iron and other military material to Japan, which could not have waged war without them. In 1938, such war supplies constituted 67 per cent of the total U.S. exports to Japan. In 1939, the proportion rose to 70 per cent. Roosevelt and his administration began to take economic action against the aggressor only in 1941. In other words, they acted only when it became clear that Japan would not confine herself to attacking China or fight the Soviet Union, but that she had decided on "southward" advance against U.S. and British spheres of power in Asia. Even after this, however, U.S. diplomats were still trying to negotiate a

* "In Memory of Norman Bethune," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, English edition, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing Vol. II, 1965, pp.337-338.

“Far Eastern Munich.” In this deal, they offered to let Japan keep her conquests in Northeast China (Manchuria), if she did not impinge too much on their interests elsewhere. The talks were actually in progress when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941.

The inter-imperialist struggle between the United States and Japan was very real and sharp. But the United States government, right up to the movement of actual hostilities, was not loath to settle it at the expense of China and the Soviet Union, hoping later to subordinate the new Japanese empire economically by the well-tested means of the dollar.

After Pearl Harbor, the tactics of ruling groups in the United States had of course to change. Now they were waging war with China as an ally. But their policy gradually emerged as an effort to enmesh this ally in such a way as to make it a virtual U.S. colony, to the permanent exclusion not only of the national aspirations of the Chinese people but also of rival imperialist influences. China was flooded with American officers, officials and advisers, military, economic and educational. These scolded the Kuomintang regime for its hopeless corruption and inefficiency, and attempted to install American commanders and comptrollers, and the most “trusted” pro-American Chinese officials, in every department of military and civil life.

In occasionally urging Chiang Kai-shek to negotiate with the Communist Party instead of plunging into civil strife while the war with Japan was still on, the United States also had its own set of perspectives. The interests of the war against Japan were a major motive while its issue still hung in the balance. But by 1944, the emphasis shifted to “saving the Kuomintang from itself,” holding it back from prematurely launching civil war until it could be groomed into a shape in which it would stand a chance of destroying or defusing the people’s revolution. And when the United States government moved in as mediator between the two parties, it pursued the vain hope that it could “negotiate” the anti-imperialist forces represented by the Liberated Areas and the People’s Army out of existence — or at any rate so entangle them that they could no longer take independent revolutionary action. This would have been a cheap way of canceling the most solid gains made by the Chinese people in a hun-

dred years of bitter experience and effort, the precious guarantee of the future which they had built and cemented with their blood.

Great Britain, in the years 1937-41, was concerned chiefly with buying off Japan. She turned over to the Japanese occupying forces in China's maritime ports the revenue of the Chinese Customs, which she had long controlled. In North China, the British-dominated Kailuan Mining Administration happily supplied the invaders with coal. In March 1938 it called on Japanese troops to suppress a strike of Chinese miners, which was done with great bloodshed.* On June 27, 1938, the British government offered to mediate between China and Japan. This was done, in the words of a British writer,** "without the least suggestion that one side might be more responsible than the other for the outbreak of the war." A Japanese victory was regarded as inevitable in London and on November 1, 1938, Prime Minister Chamberlain declared complacently, says the same author, "that he did not believe that, when the Sino-Japanese war was concluded, the new capital to develop China could be supplied by Japan alone; China could not be reconstructed without some help from Britain." In the middle of 1939, in negotiations between its Ambassador in Tokyo Sir Robert Craigie and Japanese Foreign Minister Arita, the British government formally agreed that, in its extraterritorial concession in Tianjin, the Japanese forces would have the right "to suppress or remove any such acts or causes as will obstruct them or benefit their enemy." Dutifully, it handed over for execution a number of Chinese engaged in patriotic resistance.

Not only did Britain seek an accommodation with the Japanese invaders at China's expense but she again resorted, during this period, to her old habit of utilizing China's misfortunes to nibble territory. In 1936, when the massive

* The annual report of the Kailuan Mines, printed in London *Times* of December 30, 1938, expressed appreciation of "a better understanding with the Japanese authorities... who are showing every disposition to protect the Administration and assist in the production and transport of Kaiping coal." In the same year, the dividend paid to shareholders in the mines was 7.5 per cent as against 5 per cent in the year preceding, and mainly to meet Japanese military purchases, new shafts with a capacity of 1 million tons a year were planned by this British concern (see Jones, F.C.), *Shanghai and Tientsin*, New York, 1940, p. 171.

** Luard, Evan, *Britain and China*, London, 1962, pp.45-46.

Japanese attack on China was obviously coming, the arbitrarily-drawn "McMahon line" inside Tibet, never recognized by any Chinese government, was first entered on an official British map as a "border" rather than a mere claim.* Even in the succeeding war years when Britain was fighting against Japan as China's ally, she moved her Indian troops into one point after another. In May 1944, to cite an instance, one such encroachment was protested by the Tibetan local authorities in Lhasa. Though then themselves enmeshed in British influence, they could not swallow the "McMahon line" any more than could the central government of China. In December, the British tried to overcome Lhasa's objections by proposing another "line," south of Dawang, which was also refused. In April 1945, shortly before the war's end, the Tibetans again protested against the intrusion of British-Indian soldiers at Walong. During the same period, China's land borders were subjected to trespass in other parts of Tibet, in the Aksai Chin region of Xinjiang province, and from the direction of Burma.

In 1940, London acceded to Japanese pressure to close the Burma Road, the only safe channel through which China was able to receive supplies from the West, and offered its services in arranging a Sino-Japanese "settlement." Following the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941, Britain began gradually to concentrate on a long-range policy of saving her positions in China and the rest of East Asia, both from the national liberation movements and from increasing American encroachment.

By contrast the Soviet Union, immediately after the Japanese invasion in 1937, signed a non-aggression pact with China, extended credits to her and began to supply her with military and other materials across her northwestern border. A Soviet volunteer air group, which was constantly kept up to strength, played a great role in knocking out Japanese air raiders over Nanjing, Hankou and other cities. Even the American air general Chennault, a Chiang Kai-shek

* Except for the 1936 map referred to, the majority of official Survey of India maps, during the period of British rule, either showed this boundary where China said it was, or described it as "undemarcated". On most of these matters, see the detailed and thoroughly researched book *India's China War*, by Neville Maxwell, London 1970 and New York 1970 and 1971, under the appropriate index heads.

man all through, was compelled to admit in a book written in 1949 that, "From the outbreak of the war in the summer of 1937 to the end of 1942 the bulk of China's foreign aid was Russian."*

The violently anti-Communist and anti-Soviet Madame Chiang Kai-shek, wartime chief of the Kuomintang's Aeronautical Commission, shamed the United States with the contrast between its actions and those of the U.S.S.R. She wrote in a U.S. mass circulation magazine:

Eighty per cent of Japan's war supplies come from America... and 95 per cent of the aviation gasoline which was used by Japan in her ruthless bombing was American.

Throughout the first three years of resistance Soviet Russia extended to China for the actual purchase of war supplies and other necessities, credits several times larger than the credits given by either Great Britain or America....

Furthermore, at the meetings of the League of Nations it was Russia who took an uncompromising stand in support of China's appeal that active measures should be adopted to brand Japan as the aggressor... when Japan protested that the aid extended to China by Russia was a breach of neutrality, Russia did not wilt, or surrender, or compromise, but continued to send supplies....

I may point out that Russian help has been unconditional throughout. **

On two occasions, largely in retaliation for this help, Japan attacked the territory of the Soviet Union and its ally the Mongolian People's Republic. Both times, at Lake Khassan (Zhanggufeng), not far from Vladivostok in 1937 and at Khalkhin-Gol in Mongolia in 1939, Japan sustained major defeats. The Khalkhin-Gol battles alone cost her 660 planes, large numbers of tanks and no less than 25,000 men killed.***These unflinching rebuffs were the reason

* Chennault, Claire L., *Way of a Fighter*, New York, 1949, p. 61.

** *Liberty Magazine*, New York, January 21, 1939.

*** *Khalkhin-Gol*, Col. S.N. Shishkin, Military Publishing House, U.S.S.R. Ministry of Defence, Moscow, 1954, p. 56.

Japan did not take kindly to western promptings that she satisfy her ambitions by an incursion into Siberia, preferring to try her luck along what she considered the "line of least resistance" in the South Pacific.

Finally, after breaking the back of the Hitler aggressors in 1941-45, the Soviet Union, in pursuit of an agreement with the other Allies, struck a swift and powerful blow at Japan's biggest concentration of land forces in Manchuria, making certain that the Tokyo militarists could no longer continue the war from Chinese soil and plunging them into final defeat. Participating in that blow were the forces of the Mongolian People's Republic.

The "decisive role of the atom-bomb" was a concept promoted by Washington for political ends, and strenuously propagated throughout the world after the event. In the military judgment even of the anti-Soviet U.S. air force general Chennault, expressed on the day of Japan's surrender, "Russia's entry into the Japanese war was the decisive factor in speeding its end, even if no atomic bombs had been dropped."* And two American policy analysts, one of whom later became Secretary of the Air Force in the government of President Truman, later revealed frankly that the decision to use the inhuman weapon was a political one:

Why then did we drop it? Or assuming that the use of the bomb was justified, why did we not demonstrate its power in a test under the auspices of the United Nations on the basis of which an ultimatum would be issued to Japan?

No, any test would have been impossible if the purpose was to knock Japan out before Russia came in — or at least before Russia could make anything but a token participation prior to a Japanese collapse.**

* *New York Times*, August 15, 1945.

** Cousins, Norman and Finletter, Thomas K., *Saturday Review of Literature*, June 15, 1946.

Both the above quotations are cited in *Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy*, by P.M.S. Blackett, former member of the British government's Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy (London, 1948).

So the atom-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was not, as then represented, an indispensable weapon for defeating the Japanese militarists and concluding the war against Fascism. On the contrary, the atom bomb was calculated to overawe the peoples who had been the main force in the struggle against the entire fascist Axis, and to keep the fruits of victory out of their hands. In the Far East it was supposed to make sure that the then socialist Soviet Union and the revolutionary forces that had fought Japan's imperialism in China and elsewhere in East Asia would have no voice in the post-war settlement in Japan. And this at a time when, as testified by its architect, U.S. Under-Secretary of State Joseph Grew, the policy of the United States was already to preserve the Japanese emperor on his throne, and to forestall a revolution by the Japanese people themselves.

In conclusion, it must be said that it is precisely because they did not let themselves be thus overawed that in China the Communist Party and the people could go on to win their revolution. On August 13, 1945, five days after the bomb was dropped Mao Zedong derided all feelings of helplessness in the face of the A-bomb as a recrudescence directly contrary to proletarian revolutionary reliance on the masses of the people. With only "millet plus rifles," he declared, the people's forces had successfully fought Japan's modern war machine. If U.S.-armed civil war was imposed on them by Chiang Kai-shek, they would win that too.

And several months later, in August 1946 when the civil war had already broken out, he said in the now world-famous interview with Anna Louise Strong:

The atom bomb is a paper tiger which the reactionaries use to scare people. Of course the atom bomb is a weapon of mass slaughter, but the outcome of a war is decided by the people, not by one or two new types of weapons.

All reactionaries are paper tigers... Chiang Kai-shek and his supporters, the U.S. reactionaries, are paper tigers too. Speaking of U.S. imperialism, people seem to feel that it is terribly strong. Chinese reactionaries are

using the “strength” of the United States to frighten the Chinese people. But it will be proved that the U.S. reactionaries, like all the reactionaries in history, do not have much strength. In the United States there are others who are really strong — the American people.

This estimate of the new world balance of forces as between imperialism and reaction on the one side and the peoples (particularly one's own people) on the other was not an abstract philosophical exercise. It was the strategic view with which China's Communists, led by Mao Zedong, were able to consolidate the gains of the anti-fascist struggle and to go forward not only to national but also to social liberation. And it was precisely the lack of such a strategic orientation that prevented a number of Communist parties which had taken the lead in anti-fascist struggles in western Europe from doing the same.

XVII

THE WAR OF LIBERATION AND ITS VICTORY (1946-1949)

After 1945, the United States tried to step into the shoes of defeated Japan in the Far East. The special prize which it craved was the undivided control of the great resources and markets of China. All imperialist rivals able to contest such control, or strong enough even to seek a share in it, had been eliminated or radically weakened. But the national liberation movement of the Chinese people, grown to colossal proportions, stood athwart the ambitions of the U. S. monopolies.

Hence, from the very day of Japan's capitulation, frantic activity developed in certain U.S. quarters to steal the fruits of victory from the Chinese people. This activity followed several lines, military, political and economic.

Militarily, the first step was General MacArthur's order to the Japanese army in China not to surrender to the people's forces. This was followed by Chiang Kai-shek's more specific instructions to Okamura, the Japanese commander-in-chief, to resist the people's forces. Since Chiang Kai-shek's troops had fled from the vicinity of the big cities of North and Central China and the great coastal ports many years earlier, this meant that the "surrendered" Japanese were kept under arms for a considerable time. They were later reinforced by American troops of whom there had been barely 60,000 in China at the height of the war with Japan, but whose numbers grew to 143,000 in the succeeding months. Meanwhile, U.S. Air Force transports and naval vessels

brought up over a million of Chiang's soldiers, who then took the surrender of 1,250,000 Japanese with all their supplies.

A remarkable and cynical statement of the purposes of this manoeuvre was made by the then U.S. President Harry S. Truman in the memoirs he wrote after retiring from the office. He described the situation in China at the end of World War II, and U.S. actions with regard to it, as follows:

In reality it would be only with the greatest difficulty that Chiang Kai-shek could even re-occupy south China. To get to North China, he would need an agreement with the Communists, and he could never move into Manchuria without an agreement with the Communists and the Russians. It was impossible for Chiang to occupy Northeast China and South Central China with the Communists in between the rail lines. It was perfectly clear to us that if we told the Japanese to lay down their arms immediately and march to the seaboard the entire country would be taken over by the Communists. We therefore had to take the step of using the enemy as a garrison until we could airlift Chinese National (meaning Kuomintang — I.E.) troops to North China and send Marines to guard the seaports. So the Japanese were instructed to hold their places and maintain order. In due course Chinese troops under Chiang Kai-shek would appear, the Japanese would surrender to them, march to the seaports, and we would send them back to Japan. The operation of using the Japanese to hold off the Communists was a joint decision of the State and Defence Departments of which I approved.*

In addition, the 491,000 turncoat troops under 57 generals whom Chiang himself had permitted or perhaps even told to join the enemy along with some 300,000 men of other puppet units formed by the Japanese during their occupation, were immediately recommissioned as units of the Kuomintang

* Truman, Harry S., *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman*, Vol. II, *Years of Trial and Hope*, Garden City, New York, 1956, p. 62.

army. Thus a stronger and better-equipped counter-revolutionary force than had ever existed in China was hammered together and deployed under U.S. auspices, laying the foundation for an unprecedentedly cruel and bloody civil war. The reactionary strength thus developed, however, carried within it the seeds of its own disintegration. The Chinese people had not fought the Japanese to be controlled by the United States. They had fought for national independence. They had not fought for the resumption of civil war by the reactionary and exploiting few, intent on pocketing the fruits of victory, but for the rebuilding of their country and a better life. This sentiment was present among the Kuomintang troops, as among all other Chinese.

Politically, the carrying out of the U. S.-Kuomintang plan required both time and cunning manoeuvring. For its success, it was necessary to deceive public opinion all over the world, including that in China and in the United States itself, and to accustom it to the betrayal of the objectives of the anti-Fascist war. World-wide, in the "Truman era," U.S. imperialism was building up a combination of outward "benevolence," to conceal the predatory nature of its class drives and post-war aims, with brute force, to overawe and try to crush the will of the peoples for a new life. The most immediate task, for the "American century" advocates, was to give local reactionaries in many countries the time and resources to re-establish full control of the state machinery and armed forces. At the same time, they were determined to wrest from the peoples, by cajolery where they could not yet do so by violence, every element of political and particularly of armed strength built up in the course of anti-Fascist resistance. In China, with these ends in view, the rulers of America kept up the appearance of "mediation" between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party.

The Communist Party was quite aware of U.S. and Kuomintang motives. Nevertheless it negotiated, taking its stand on the solid ground of the desire of the Chinese people for peaceful national reconstruction and progress. But it always kept before Party members and the whole nation the question of the choice of the "two roads." If China remained a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country, all the sacrifices of the past would have been in vain. China, therefore,

must become an independent country, belonging to the masses of her people and completing her democratic revolution in the only possible way — under the leadership of the working class. This would be accomplished peacefully if possible. But any reactionary violence to frustrate it would be smashed. “If there is any opportunism during this period,” wrote Mao Zedong, “it will lie in failing to struggle hard and in making a voluntary gift to Chiang Kai-shek of the fruits which should go to the people.” So while taking part in the talks, the Party kept vigilant and prepared to shatter the repeated military and political provocations of the U. S.-backed Chiang Kai-shek.

Having learned the bitter lessons of history, the Communist Party was determined that the Chinese people must never again be plunged, through illusion as to the basic nature of imperialism and reaction, into a hell of massacre and retrogression as they had been in 1927. Mao Zedong wrote in 1945 at the moment of victory over Japan:

In 1927 our Party was still in its infancy and was mentally wholly unprepared for Chiang Kai-shek’s counter-revolutionary surprise attack. Consequently the fruits of victory won by the people were soon lost, the people had to undergo long suffering, and a bright China was plunged into darkness. This time things are different; our Party has acquired the rich experience of three revolutions and a much higher degree of political maturity.*

Calling attention to the war preparations of Chiang Kai-shek, backed by the United States, Mao Zedong continued:

When we see the other fellow holding something in his hands, we should do some investigating. What does he hold in his hands? Swords. What are swords for? For killing. Whom does he want to kill with his

* “The Situation and Our Policy After the Victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan,” *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, English edition, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, Vol. IV, 1961, p. 14.

swords? The people. Having made these findings, investigate further — the Chinese people, too, have hands and can take up swords, they can forge a sword if there is none handy. The Chinese people have discovered this truth after long investigation and study.

To fulfil its responsibility to the people, Mao stressed, the Party must never repeat the 1927 mistake of the capitulationist Chen Duxiu that had cost the people so much.

Chen Tu-hsiu, for example, did not understand that with swords one can kill people. Some say, this is a plain everyday truth; how can a leader of the Communist Party fail to know it? But you never can tell.... We have adopted a course different from Chen Tu-hsiu's and enabled the people suffering from oppression and slaughter to take up swords.*

By negotiating with Chiang Kai-shek while holding firmly to arms won by the people, the Chinese Communist Party managed to get the Kuomintang to sign two agreements with it, on October 10, 1945 and January 10, 1946. They provided for the democratization of the Chinese government and the amalgamation of the Kuomintang forces and people's armies on a coalition basis (not the absorption of the latter by the former). Chiang consented, but only to win time. Then, as expected, he broke his word. But the ultimate result was not the driving of the Communist Party into the political wilderness (as was the case when U.S.-backed reactionaries tried similar manoeuvres in Western Europe). It was the utter defeat of Chiang's regime when it chose to resort to force.

This result was guaranteed by the victory, within the Chinese Party, of Mao Zedong's revolutionary line. In sharp contrast, a different view had been declared almost immediately after the Chongqing agreements, that the main form of struggle in the Chinese revolution would henceforth be "peaceful and

* *Ibid.*, p. 15

parliamentary," the people's armed forces should "become units in the national army" liquidating their own Party organizations, and many Communists would "enter the ranks of the officials." In Chinese terms, all this was a recrudescence of the Chen Duxiu line of 1925-27. In international terms it smacked of the "parliamentary road" of Kautsky and Bernstein, and paralleled the post-World War II line of self-disarmament and (short-lived) participation in bourgeois governments by which the French and Italian Communist Parties handed over the fruits of victory to the reactionaries.

The Chinese Party under Mao Zedong's leadership, however, retained its independence of action and its army. While negotiating with the Kuomintang, it could and did make concessions as regards the areas it held (eight liberated areas were evacuated), pullbacks of troops and pace of desired progress. But nowhere did it hand over a single weapon, a single bullet, that during the anti-Japanese war had come into the hands of the people's forces, regular or guerrilla.

In addition to the Chinese people, the Soviet Union and progressive groups in all countries had come out strongly against the Kuomintang's civil war plots.* At the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in December 1945, the U.S. and British governments also put their names to a joint statement with the U.S.S.R. in favor of peace and unity in China. The U.S. under

* To the honor of the American people, they produced an active and wide range of opposition to backing Chiang Kai-shek. Right after World War II it included much of the U.S. army rank and file in China (on Shanghai's streets parades of Chinese students and workers chanting "Yanks Go Home!" sometimes criss-crossed with lines of U.S. soldiers clamouring "We want to go home!") Also opposed was a majority of American staff members of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in China shocked by the pocketing of relief funds by Kuomintang officials. In the U.S.A. itself protests were made or sponsored by many prominent academics, writers, scientists, clergymen, actors, journalists and war veterans (the anti-interventionist Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy was chaired by the retired U.S. Marine combat hero Maj.-Gen. Evans F. Carlson), as well as several major labor union leaders and members of both houses of Congress. Silent sentiment against backing Chiang was far wider than its organized expression. To erase it took some years of official and unofficial remolding of public opinion for the needs of the Cold War, including McCarthy-type intimidation. Events and long, bitter experience finally proved the pro-interventionists wrong and the anti-interventionists right.

Truman, still in need of a camouflage for its abandonment of the tendencies toward cooperation between two systems which had developed in the Roosevelt period, signed the statement without later abiding by its pledges as events were to prove.

Nevertheless these negotiations and agreements, both domestic and international, proved favorable to the Chinese revolution. In their intention to use them only as a mask, the U.S. and Chiang failed miserably. Instead the effect, as time went on, was thoroughly to expose the chasm between their words and their deeds before the Chinese people and the whole world.

Economically, the Kuomintang officials who had long been sitting out the war against the Japanese in the remote hinterland returned to the former enemy-occupied areas like hungry vultures. They used their positions in the government to pocket the factories, warehouses, shipping and other property which Japan had previously seized from the national capitalists, ignoring the claims of the original owners. Bureaucrat-capitalism grew monstrosly to control the bulk of China's modern economy. The personal fortunes acquired by the "Four Big Families" of Chiang Kai-shek, Finance Minister H.H. Kung, Foreign Minister T. V. Soong and the Chen brothers, who were in control of the Kuomintang party machine, rose to a total estimated at U.S. \$ 20 billion.*

At the same time, the United States collected a first instalment on its support to the Kuomintang in the form of the Sino-American trade treaty of 1946. This opened unrestricted access to the Chinese market for U.S. investments and goods. Cheap American commodities of every conceivable type flooded China's cities, many of them coming in duty free under the guise of "aid," making the revival of domestic production and employment impossible. Hucksters for American companies flew here and there on U.S. Army planes and the U. S.-controlled "Chinese" civilian airlines, earmarking mineral and

* The same Harry Truman who had made such an effort to aid Chiang had this to say in much later retrospect in 1973: "Chiang Kai-shek and Madame (Chiang) and their families, the Soong family and the Kungs were all thieves. And they stole 750 million dollars out of the 3.5 billion we sent to Chiang. They stole it, and it's invested down in Sao Paulo (in Brazil) and right here in New York." *Plain Speaking, an Oral Biography of Harry Truman*, by Merle Miller, New York, 1974.

other resources for future exploitation.

With the paralysis of normal economic life and the growth of Chiang Kai-shek's military budget came unprecedented inflation. It afforded huge profits to bureaucrat-capitalist speculators, middlemen in handling foreign goods, and corrupt officials. But it brought starvation to workers and ruin to ordinary industrialists, merchants and salaried professionals. This situation led to great strikes and demonstrations of labor in the cities, and to a rapid growth of anti-imperialist, anti-government and radical sentiment among the petty and middle bourgeoisie. The cessation of U.S. intervention and civil war became a common demand of the vast majority of the people throughout China. The plain evidence that the U.S. was once more fostering Japanese militarism and reviving the economic power of the Japanese monopolies further sharpened this feeling, as did murders and rapes committed by U.S. troops.

The Kuomintang, with its American backers, replied to every sign of protest in the only way they knew, by terror. U.S. tanks, manned by Chiang's troops, were driven into the compound of a cotton mill in Shanghai to quell the strikers, mostly women. Kuomintang secret service assassins armed with the noiseless pistols supplied by U.S. Naval Intelligence slew such cultural leaders as Professors Wen Yiduo and Li Gongpu, associated with the hitherto "middle of the road" Democratic League, and shot students on college campuses in many cities (in one notorious case while they were asleep in their dormitories). Apart from this, the arrests and executions, spying, provocations, reactionary censorship, raids on bookstores and other practices of the period of the Second Revolutionary Civil War in the 1930's were once more applied, with ever greater fury.

But this was no longer 1919, or 1927, or the 1930's. In the new historic situation, the growing opposition could not be suppressed even temporarily because it was a part of a firm, broadly based, people's front of national liberation. At the center of this new popular alliance stood the fully mature Communist Party and its battle-steeled armed forces, the prestige of which grew uninterruptedly. The people's front was on a high political plane and more extensive than ever, proving that bold militancy of leadership and aims

did not stand in contradiction to broad unity as some had feared. It passed quickly from the struggle for internal peace and reform to demands for the revolutionary overthrow of Kuomintang fascism, "land to the tillers," the confiscation of bureaucrat-capital and complete national liberation from imperialism.

This process was accelerated when the reality of civil war broke through the semblance of American mediation. The activities of the chief mediator, General Marshall, were such that an American weekly magazine in China editorialized:

For our part we are still attempting to figure out whether General Marshall has come here as an American mediator or as the Commander of the combined American-Nationalist (i. e. Kuomintang — Ed.) forces.*

U.S. military missions were now openly active on the battlefields of the civil war.

In the first phase of hostilities, from the middle of 1946 to July 1947, the People's Liberation Army withdrew from many cities, including its old headquarters in Yan'an. Its tactics now were to strengthen its solid foundation in the countryside, and to exhaust and destroy the Kuomintang armies, rather than to retain fixed positions. Everywhere it went, it acted as the carrier and protector of land reform. This was no longer limited to reduction of rents and taxes, as in the time of the anti-Japanese national united front. It now meant the uncompensated division of landlords' fields among the peasants and outright cancellation of all accumulated rural debt — i.e. the destruction of feudalism. The result was that ever new masses of peasants flowed into the ranks of the revolutionary forces, or formed their own militia for local defense. In addition, peasant revolts took place throughout the Kuomintang areas. Both politically and militarily, in the rueful words of an American military report, later summarized in the U.S. State Department's "White Paper" on China, the Kuomintang troops "found themselves in a position not dissimilar from that of the Japanese during their war with China," while the People's Army "succeeded in keeping their own units intact and mobile for eventual

* *China Weekly Review*, Shanghai, June 22, 1946.

concentration and use at points of their own choosing.”*

Under these circumstances, the Kuomintang expeditionary forces, though supplied with American arms in great profusion, underwent rapid political disintegration. Reports by U.S. officials drew attention to the “exhaustion of the Nationalists, their growing indignation over disparity between officers’ enrichment and soldiers’ low pay and their lack of interest in fighting far from home among an unfriendly populace, whereas the Communists are in position of fighting for native soil.”** The land reform affected the mood of the Kuomintang troops too. Kuomintang soldiers whose homes were in areas held by the People’s Army were allotted land in the same way as all other peasants. They could not regard as “enemies” the Party and army which had given them and their families the land.

It is no wonder then that neither U.S. \$6,000 million worth of weapons and other war aid, nor the training and advice which the U.S. military mission gave to the Kuomintang regime, were able to save it. And, just as Mao Zedong had foreseen, the U. S. monopoly of the atom-bomb, could not turn the balance either. The Chinese people did not fear the bomb, they knew there was no way that such weapons could prevail against a people in arms in a revolutionary struggle, and it was just such struggle that they developed on a gigantic scale. Nor did they fear the bogey which was assiduously paraded by the imperialists that “a third world war would erupt” if the Chinese revolution were pushed through to the end.

Moreover, at the highest and most prestigious level of the international Communist movement itself, the Chinese Party led by Mao Zedong had to face views of possibilities and results quite different from its own. “At the time of the War of Liberation, Stalin first enjoined us not to press on with the revolution, maintaining that if civil war flared up, the Chinese nation would run the risk of destroying itself,” Mao was to recall a decade later.*** This

* *United States Relations with China*, U.S. States Department, 1949, p. 314.

** *Ibid.* p.316.

*** In “The Ten Major Relationships” (section on “Relationships Between China and Other Countries”), written in 1956 but not officially published until 1977 (*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Beijing, English ed., Vol V, 1977, p.304).

posed a most acute test of the capacity of the Chinese Party to make an independent Marxist judgment of the situation and put it to the touchstone of decisive practice in its own country. It did so and successfully. The birth of the new China was the result. The crucial importance of this objectively correct judgment and action can be judged by imagining the world without the new China, or with China frozen for decades in uneasy division. "After the victory of the Chinese revolution, he (Stalin) admitted his mistake," the Chinese Party has stated elsewhere.* Both comments, it should be noted here, were made not in the course of negating Stalin in general, as the Khrushchevites did, but of affirming him as a great Marxist-Leninist whose overall achievements outweighed his errors. The point was that the charting of the revolutionary course in any country, including the heeding of valid opinions from the outside and non-acceptance of those not judged valid, is the duty and responsibility of its own revolutionary vanguard.

How, then, did the Chinese Communist Party analyze the whole situation in the post-World War II period? Compromises between the socialist and imperialist powers would certainly be reached, Mao Zedong and other Chinese leaders believed. Because of the actual balance of forces and the pressure of the mounting people's struggles, such compromises were possible as well as desirable. But, Mao wrote in 1946, "such compromise does not require the peoples in the countries of the capitalist world to follow suit and make compromises at home."** The fight of the peoples against the reactionaries should be carried forward and expanded, and the more this was done the greater the obstacles to the third world war, dreamed of by the imperialists. The problem was not to avoid "irritating" the war-seekers and reactionaries

* In "On the Question of Stalin, Second Comment on the Open Letter of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," September 1963. From the documentary symposium *The Polemic on the General Line of the International Communist Movement*, Beijing, English ed., 1963, p.129.

** These ideas are stated in Mao Zedong's "Some Points in Appraisal of the Present International Situation," a fundamental analysis of the post-World War II perspectives made in April 1946 and printed in his *Selected Works*, English edition, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, Vol. IV, 1961, pp.87-88.

but to tie them down hand and foot — and no people internally ready to make a revolution should fear to do so.

In fact there is no effective weapon that the imperialists and reactionaries possess, or will ever possess, against a revolutionary movement rooted in the masses. Chiang Kai-shek, like the Japanese aggressors before him and the U. S. aggressors in Vietnam after him, tried to use the “secret of victory” of the revolutionaries against the revolutionaries themselves in “special” and “anti-guerilla guerilla” warfare. But this failed utterly, because revolutionary modes of war can succeed only on the revolutionary political basis of popular support by those to whom a people’s army is always “ours” and an anti-popular army is always the enemy.

In China, by July 1947 the people’s revolutionary forces had achieved the “encirclement of the cities by the villages” in military and economic terms. They had also achieved the encirclement and isolation of the Kuomintang by the Chinese people, in both cities and villages, in terms of political sentiment. In that month the People’s Liberation Army crossed the Yellow River southward. This act began the second and last phase of the war, the strategic offensive to liberate the urban centers. At a Party conference in December 1947, Chairman Mao Zedong pointed out that it marked not only a turning point in the civil war but “the turning point from growth to extinction for imperialist rule in China, now over a hundred years old.”* And so it proved in fact.

In September-November 1948, the whole of Northeast China was freed and 472,000 Kuomintang troops there were destroyed or taken prisoner. American military advisers reported in near-despair that at Jinzhou “units of the 93rd Army defending the city defected to the Communists,”** that at other points “American-trained and equipped units disintegrated,” and that from the Mukden (Shenyang) area “a few thousands (of Kuomintang troops)... were evacuated by ship but the overwhelming majority of the government forces surrendered without a fight.”*** It is notable that, in

* “The Present Situation and Our Tasks,” *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, English edition, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, Vol. IV, 1961, p. 157.

** *United States Relations with China*, U.S. State Department, 1949, p.320.

*** *Ibid.* p.321.

anticipation of such a collapse of the reactionary forces, the United States had explored ways of using the United Nations to stem the triumph of the people's forces in the strategic Northeast China. General A.C. Wedemeyer sent by Truman to report on the situation, had officially recommended in September 1947 that "the United Nations might take immediate action to bring about the cessation of hostilities in Manchuria as a prelude to the establishment of a Guardianship or Trusteeship."* He also proposed seeking U.N. endorsement for Washington's intervention in China as a whole. This was a valuable early lesson in the constant U.S. effort to use the international organization, with its aura of peacemaking and prestige, as a tool of reaction and neo-colonialism for direct military attacks on revolutionary forces or lulling them into situations where they could be destroyed. A later example, of course, was Korea. The 1947 episode is mentioned here to show how deeply founded in experience was the Chinese people's vigilance, then and for long after, with regard to the U.N. of Cold War days. Paying no attention to these manoeuvres China's revolutionary forces went right on fighting and winning victories in the area Wedemeyer had marked for "international trusteeship."**

The Northeast victories shifted the balance of numbers in favor of the People's Liberation Army. Thenceforth, it exceeded the Kuomintang forces not only in fighting ability and political support but also in numbers.

In the Huaihai campaign in Jiangsu province which followed immediately afterwards (November 1948-January 1949), 555,000 Kuomintang troops were knocked out. Again, General Barr, head of the U.S. Military Aid Group

* "Report to President Truman by Lt.-Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, U.S. Army," submitted on September 19, 1947, *Ibid.* p. 767.

** Nor till 1971, almost a quarter-century later did the new China take her rightful seat in the U.N. And she did so only after the organization itself had undergone changes — reflecting those brought about in the world by the cumulative victories of the Chinese revolution, the anti-imperialist wars in Korea and Indo-China, and the independence struggles in scores of former colonies and semi-colonies. Then China entered with no surrender of national or revolutionary principle and ranged herself beside the resurgent peoples, the Third World countries and all other states and forces opposed to dictation, aggression or divide-the-world deals by the superpowers.

with the Kuomintang, was compelled to report to his superiors the "known defection to the Communists of two Nationalist divisions with the suspected defection of an additional three."* The Huaihai triumph resulted not only in the destruction of most of the "crack" Kuomintang troops but also in the capture of very large quantities of tanks, artillery and other modern arms.

At this point, when the Chinese people were showing unparalleled heroism in battle and tremendous capacity in military generalship, the Chiang Kai-shek government, through Jiang Tingfu (T.F. Tsiang), its representative in the United Nations, showed that it had lost all sense of shame by approaching U.S. Secretary of State Marshall with an offer that America take over its bankrupt "Nationalist" army lock, stock and barrel. "Would the United States agree," it asked, "to the appointment of U.S. officers to actual command of the Chinese army units under the pretence of acting as advisers?" Jiang also asked for an American general to do the Kuomintang's strategic planning. Marshall, aware that the military game was up, replied ruefully that it would be "a very serious matter for the United States to send an officer to almost certain failure."**

In January 1949, the great North China port of Tianjin was liberated in battle, and Beijing surrendered with its whole garrison. Foreign observers of the victory parades of the People's Liberation Army in both cities wrote that they marched with the latest American equipment, originally supplied to the Kuomintang. In January 1949 alone, the Kuomintang lost another half-million men while the people's forces grew apace. The official American report on the military situation mourned:

During this same period the Communists effectively integrated into their own forces approximately 200,000 former Government troops who could be used as combatants, with possibly 400,000 more captured Nation-

* *United States Relations with China*, p. 322.

** *Ibid.* p.887. Wording as reported in Marshall's memorandum of November 6, 1948.

alist troops being integrated into Communist service units.*

By the spring of 1949, the people's forces were poised on the north bank of the Yangtze river. In the last-moment manoeuvres of the imperialists and their Kuomintang tools at this time, the whole ribbon of the past hundred years of Chinese history seemed to be unrolling once more, but backwards and at breakneck speed.

Highly-placed American officials flourished their dollars in last-minute efforts to buy off the revolution. For example, Paul Hoffman, head of the Marshall Plan administration at the time, appeared in Shanghai with an offer to "aid all parts of China."** His condition was that the Communist Party should halt the people's armies in their tracks, and pledge itself not to "purge" Chiang Kai-shek and the other U.S. quislings.

Kuomintang warlords and politicoes, the last successors of the Qing dynasty and of the traitorous Yuan Shikai as defenders of feudalism and policemen for imperialism in China, began to speak of "democracy" and "internal peace." They offered to resume negotiations, and even promised a degree of "land reform," with compensation to landlords. This was to be stage managed, characteristically, by a "Sino-American agricultural commission."

In April, when the People's Liberation Army began to cross the Yangtze, entering the most important base of imperialism and of Chiang, British warships appeared again on the river, like puny and ghostly successors of those other fleets which in the 1860's had attacked the Taipings, in 1911 had exerted successful pressure on the bourgeois politicians who took over from the Manchus, in 1927 had bombarded Nanjing and acted as one of the levers in subverting the revolution, and in 1930 had shelled the Chinese Red Army in Changsha. This time, however, the result was different. They were promptly and easily driven out by the guns of the popular forces. Even the worst die-hards understood that the old type of "gunboat diplomacy" had stopped working. Terror by scarecrow had outlived its day in China, and no further

* *Ibid.* p.323.

** This became the standard U.S. interventionist practice; President Johnson's bombings of North Vietnam in 1965 were similarly attended by offers of "aid in rebuilding" to bribe the Vietnamese forces into ceasing resistance.

naval or military demonstrations of this variety took place. The *New York Herald Tribune* wrote a self-revealing epitaph for the whole business, and for U.S. policy as well, when it said editorially:

If effective foreign intervention were possible in China, the Communist rebels (*sic.*) might be dealt with in the same manner that the Boxer Rebellion was put down almost 50 years ago and the Taiping rebellion was put down in 1865.... This cannot be done today.... A few western guns or even many of them, are no longer effective instruments to cow and control millions of Asiatics.

Indeed, those days had gone.

In the meantime, the Communist Party, leader of the people's revolution, made plans for the next stage. A month before the Yangtze was crossed, its Central Committee met and took a number of crucial decisions. It directed that the center of revolutionary work be shifted, after twenty years of the accumulation and expansion of forces in the villages, from the rural areas back to the cities. It also laid down the principles of the people's government to be established on the basis of the impending nationwide victory.

In the remaining months of 1949, all the main cities of China were liberated, and the U.S. missions were forced to withdraw, taking Chiang Kai-shek and the small, organized remnant of his army by American transport to Taiwan. But Taiwan itself was available to him as a refuge only because it was separated from the mainland by a body of water patrolled by the U.S. fleet. In fact, it was precisely in this island province of China that, apart from the fighting on the fronts, the biggest anti-Kuomintang action had been undertaken in the course of the People's Liberation War. In 1945, after 50 years of Japanese occupation, Taiwan's intensely patriotic people had rejoiced at their long hoped-for reunification with the rest of the country, and nourished considerable illusions about the Chiang Kai-shek regime. By 1947, however, Kuomintang oppression and exactions had driven them to an open revolt that was part of the entire Chinese people's struggle for liberation. The rising was put down by the ruthless massa-

cre of tens of thousands. Just as its anniversary, February 28, is commemorated throughout the country each year so its tradition, alive in continuing resistance, will finally help terminate the Kuomintang-caused separation and rejoin Taiwan to China's other provinces and to the new progress of the entire nation.

The victory in China's cities was not only military but political and economic. The imperialists, when their catspaws were beaten in the field, expressed the hope that the urban technicians and intellectuals would flee from the People's Liberation Army or refuse to cooperate with it. After having worked so long in the villages, they reckoned, the Communist Party would break its teeth on the knotty economic and administrative problems of such centers as Shanghai, with its 6-million population, and be corrupted by the atmosphere of speculation and vice which had arisen there under alien control and the rule of decaying Chinese reaction. All this was deeply revealing. The American press had already lamented that it was impossible to "cow and control" China. Now the same press preached solemnly that what it termed "the ideals of the free world," would be saved by — corruption!*

But the facts made hash of such predictions. They proved that the people's forces enjoyed the support not only of the workers and peasants but also of intellectuals, technicians and patriotic national capitalists. All these groups, far from running away, welcomed them as leaders of a nation at last independent. Within a few months, the new administration had achieved the revival of production and the halting of the runaway inflation, solving problems before which the Kuomintang had been powerless in all its

* Recall that Mao Zedong had warned as early as July 12, 1945, before the end of World War II, that by backing Chiang Kai-shek the U.S. government would "fall hopelessly into the deep stinking cesspool of Chinese reaction" and that such policies, if continued, would "place a crushing burden on the government and people of the United States and plunge them into endless trial and tribulation." ("On the Danger of the Hurley Policy," Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 336.) "This point must be brought home to the people of the United States," Mao concluded with his usual stress on the common interests of all peoples. Would that it had been possible — before the further burdens and tribulations brought upon them by the interventions in Korea, and Indo-China. The normalization of U.S.-China relations in the 1970's was a beneficial result of lessons taught by history.

years of rule.

Then the American government, which had so long boasted of its “amity toward China,” provided U.S. planes, piloted by U.S.-trained Chiang Kai-shek airmen from Taiwan, to bomb Shanghai’s power supply, hoping thus to halt the industries of China’s biggest city and, by casting its workers hungry on the streets, to turn them against the new authorities. It also resorted to blockade and wove various plots of sabotage and espionage. But all this did not discourage the Chinese people. It made them see things more clearly, and united them more closely around the leadership that represented their true interests.

Finally, in their last desperate efforts to preserve bases for disruption and for the ultimate re-establishment of their control over China, the imperialists tried their old game of detaching her outlying areas. In these places, the allies of “western democracy” were the discredited and traitorous feudal remnants.

In Inner Mongolia the U.S. incited separatist action by the clique of Prince Teh, who had been the puppet ruler of the region under the Japanese. But this was a vain effort. Part of the area had been liberated much earlier, and its working people of both majority and minority nationalities were richly experienced in united armed struggle. So the whole region was quickly cleared. Very instructive were the complaints of the local feudalists when they saw the game was up. According to a U.S. correspondent, they put “blame for Prince Teh’s plight on irresponsible American intelligence agents,” whose promises of lavish aid had influenced him and others to “expose themselves by resisting.”* There were other cases, the reporter added, in which U.S. operatives in China had lured their local proteges “out on limbs by false promises” — a grim lesson for all such expendable tools.

In the provinces of Ningxia (inhabited by the Hui Mohammedans) and Qinghai (with many Huis, Tibetans and Mongolians), the United States placed its bet on another set of anachronistic tyrants — the Ma warlord family. There was approv-

* *New York Herald Tribune*, May 10, 1950, dispatch by Christopher Rand.

ing U.S. publicity for such evidences of the Mas' "firm anti-Communism" as their ferocious public beheading of 500 military prisoners. But the people's armed forces, arriving in the area, rapidly finished off these late loves of Washington.

In Xinjiang, the U.S. consulate-general established in Urumqi during World War II gave its backing to the murderous raiding activities of Osman, a bandit chief. It was an inglorious chapter which ended with the death of the most active U.S. agent in the area, vice-consul Douglas Mackiernan, while fleeing from Xinjiang to Tibet in 1950. Osman and other tools of the U.S. were captured and executed not long afterwards. The former British Consulate in Kashgar was also implicated. As a result, China deported Fox Holmes, the last incumbent of this outpost established in the days of Younghusband's probings into Xinjiang in the 1880's. So the net effect of the final foreign-abetted effort to resist the revolution in Xinjiang was a people's victory that destroyed the position of the imperialists both new and old.

Most fascinating to the U.S. military was Tibet, "the roof of the world," in which they saw great strategic possibilities for air force and rocket installations to dominate all China, the U.S.S.R. and India.* First penetrating the region during World War II, they conducted reconnaissance, made political contacts with the most imperialist-corrupted section of the serf-owning aristocracy and equipped a radio network. As the Kuomintang tottered toward collapse, U.S. agents became more active. Notable was the 1949 journey of the Lowell Thomases, father and son, ostensibly only as radio reporters. Actually, as they later revealed, they had been briefed by General MacArthur who commanded the U.S. forces in the Far East from Tokyo, by Gen. Willoughby who headed his intelligence, and by Loy Henderson, U.S. ambassador to India. The Thomases returned from Lhasa proclaiming the urgency of sending in "modern weapons and advisers to instruct in their use." After rushing to see President Truman in Washington, they transmitted to the Lhasa serf-owners Truman's "hope to organize the moral forces of the world against the

*This idea was explicitly propagandized in Amaury de Riencourt's *Roof of the World, Tibet, Key to Asia*, New York, 1950.

immoral,” and a proposal from U.S. Secretary of State Acheson that a high Washington official enter Tibet disguised as “merely another traveller” to survey the field for “a definite program of support.”*

The U.S. plan of incitement and penetration in Tibet was superimposed on an already complex situation. The British had long been deeply entrenched there. Working persistently to advance their old “buffer state” scheme they had inspired the creation of a “Bureau of Foreign Affairs” in Lhasa in 1943, during the Sino-Japanese war, and backed the perpetrators of a massacre of hundreds of clerical and lay adherents of Chinese sovereignty in 1947. Also in 1947, a British-arranged “Asian Conference” in Delhi had tried to present Tibet as a distinct political entity, and rigged up a delegation and flag for it. In the same year, India became independent. But India’s new government, representing the big capitalists and landlords, had no thought of renouncing the fruits of Britain’s Tibetan aggressions; rather it wanted to inherit and expand them. Thus the western powers could still base themselves on India and use her as a cat’s-paw for their own strategy. A web of intrigue was woven from Kalimpong and other Indian border towns. Britain’s main official expert on Tibet, Hugh Richardson, executor of her policy in Lhasa since 1936, stayed on as an “Indian” functionary.

In 1948, India, Britain and the U.S. admitted an openly separatist “Tibetan trade delegation” which was given American visas by the U.S. ambassador to China, J. Leighton Stuart, despite its lack of Chinese passports. In London, it was received by Prime Minister Clement Attlee. This was too much even for the moribund Chiang Kai-shek government, which made a series of protests.** But the foreign wire-pullers in Lhasa, working franti-

* The signed letter by Lowell Thomas, Jr., to Lhasa, which fell into the hands of the People’s Liberation Army, was long on display in the Palace of Nationalities in Beijing. It is dated May 10, 1950 and identifies Acheson’s proposed undercover emissary as “Mr. Max Thornburg, with whom I worked for two summers in Turkey and Iran... an American elder statesman. He has been working hard to keep Communism out of the Middle East.” Thornburg, besides being a government official, was an important man in the Rockefeller oil empire, an expert in tying local feudalists to the coat-tails of U.S. monopoly capital.

** For an account by an ex-Kuomintang official see Li Tieh-tseng, *The Historical Status of Tibet*. New York. 1956.

cally to complete their schemes before the forces of the people's revolution spread over China's entire national territory, paid no attention. On July 8, 1949, at their instance, in an effort to break the continuity of Chinese sovereignty, Kuomintang officials were told to leave Lhasa.

This manoeuvre was exposed and countered by the People's Liberation Army's immediate firm proclamation that nothing would deter it from freeing all parts of China. In actual fact, the struggle went on for over a year and a half afterwards, with the imperialists exposing themselves more and more as their position weakened. While U.S. agents like the Lowell Thomases carried on secret wire-pulling within Tibet, and loud public propaganda to project a "Tibetan question" in the world's press and radio, American arms flowed across the Himalayas.* In Britain, as soon as the People's Republic of China was proclaimed, there was talk of reviving the old "condition" put before the 1911 Republic after the collapse of the Qing dynasty: no recognition unless China gave up Tibet.** And even after Britain did officially declare recognition of China's new government, her agents ensconced in Tibet ran U.S. supplied communications equipment for the separatists and, feeling that time was running out, indulged in open interference. One, Reginald Fox, called himself "Tibetan Foreign Minister" and addressed

* See, for example, the dispatch in the *Yorkshire Post* in June 1950 in which its Calcutta correspondent reported U.S. weapons being shipped in through Nathu-la Pass. And details of the subsequent U.S. involvement were spelled out in "The CIA Tibetan Conspiracy," by Christopher Mullin in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Hongkong, Sep. 5, 1975. In the period from 1956 to 1972 this involvement included the parachuting into Tibet of guns, and "guerrillas" trained at such places as Camp Hale, Colorado, financing and arming of "secret armies" for border raids, and a variety of political intrigues. Some of the story of Camp Hale, and of attempts to hush it up, was told by David Wise in *The Politics of Lying*, New York, 1973, pp. 238-262. And on Feb. 19, 1977 the Associated Press reported from Washington in connection with public revelations of U.S. intelligence operations, some further concrete details.

** See Luard, Evan. *Britain and China*, London, 1962, p. 77: "On October 3 (1949) a leading article in *The Times* said that, although British trading interests in the Far East were in favor of recognition, other considerations... such as especially China's expressed intention to invade Tibet, would have to be borne in mind." Not "borne in mind" by *The Times* was the fact that even Britain had never found it possible to question, in international law, the fact that Tibet had been for centuries a part of China, so there could be no "invasion" except from outside China, such as Britain herself had carried out several times over the past century.

statements to a number of countries. Another, Robert Ford, was caught red-handed in military and cloak-and-dagger action.* The British government itself, in sharp contrast to the alacrity with which the path of the illegal separatist Tibetan "trade mission" to the West had been smoothed in 1948, held up transit visas through its colony of Hongkong for Lhasa delegates going to Beijing to negotiate the peaceful liberation of Tibet as a part of the new China, and thus delayed the talks for months. India, on her part, tried to talk the new China into a voluntary surrender of sovereignty in Tibet. In a series of notes to Beijing, she declared that the entry of the Liberation Army would "give powerful support to those who are opposed to the admission of the People's Government to the United Nations" and even cause "drift toward general war."** While uttering these dark forebodings as to what would happen if China freed her own land, the Indian government continued Britain's nibbling at China's border territory. Some time earlier, taking advantage of China's civil war, the Indian army had exceeded even the British encroachments in the area of the "McMahon line," drawing protests from the Kuomintang government in 1947 and 1949. The new China did not raise the border question, hoping that India would accept relations based on friendship and the liquidation of the heritage of the former imperialist rule over both countries, in which case an amicable settlement could be reached. But on the immediate issue, Tibet, China acted with great firmness. The P.L.A. kept right on in its march which resulted in the peaceful liberation of Tibet, a procedure agreed upon with the Lhasa local authorities in May 1951.

In the course of this whole episode, China made it clear that she could never be argued, or frightened, out of her own territory. Particularly ill-suited

* Released by China after some years of detention, Ford tried to whitewash his activities in a book, *Captured in Tibet*, London, Pan Books, 1958. But this book was his self-indictment. For instance, he quoted himself, as advising feudal rebel forces in Chamdo in China's then existing Tibetan-inhabited province of Xikang, "Put some Bren guns in the hills and dynamite the bridges." (p. 51) Further, while denying personal participation in the poisoning of the patriotic and forward-looking Ge-Da Living Buddha, to whose sincere integrity he himself paid tribute, he declared shamelessly, "I think I know who killed him. I hope he will never be found out." (p.92)

** Indian notes to China, October 21 and 28 and November 1, 1950.

was the suggestion that she buy her way into her own rightful seat in the United Nations by such surrenders. That U.N., then dominated by the U. S.A., had been the intended tool for robbing her of her Northeast. At the very moment of the Indian notes, its flag was being misused to invade Korea and menace her own border. The "drift to war," China knew, would become a reality not if she asserted and protected her sovereignty but if she wavered in doing so. For then vast Tibet, too, would become a place where the imperialists could spin plots and plant bases.

In not abandoning Tibet, China's Communists were performing not only their national and international duty but also their class duty. Past Chinese governments had failed to defend Tibet and other minority regions from imperialist incursions. Internally, they had subjected them to national oppression and feudal exploitation. The Chinese people, accomplishing at last their revolution against imperialism and feudalism, could not betray any nationality in the country by leaving it a prey to these forces. China's revolution, its benefits, and prospects, are for all her nationalities.

After Tibet, the only major Chinese territory still under foreign control was Taiwan. The Chinese people were, and are, determined to re-unite Taiwan province to the rest of the country, however long it might take.

Let us now sum up the results of the War of Liberation.

The most important, the most overall, was China's recovery of national sovereignty, so often humiliatingly violated by unequal treaties imposed on her since the mid-1800's. Apart from, and conditioning all else, it was the victory of China's century-old War of Independence.

Militarily, some eight million Kuomintang troops were put out of action, while some 54,000 artillery pieces, 319,000 machine guns and numberless rifles passed into the hands of the people who used them to win and defend their victory.

Economically, the grip of the landlords was broken in very large areas of the country, thus providing a basis for the later completion of the land reform on a nationwide scale. With the liberation of the cities, the monopolistic concentration of industrial, banking and commercial power in the hands of the

bureaucrat-capitalists was declared to be public property. It thus lost its predatory nature and became the socialist leading sector of China's new democratic economy. Private industry and trade, where productive and non-speculative in character, were helped to recover and play their role in reviving and extending economic activity.

On October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China was proclaimed. This new state was led by the working class. It was based on the alliance of workers and peasants. It gave representation to all democratic classes including the national capitalists. It united all nationalities of the country on a basis of equality of rights and duties. Its establishment marked the triumph of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution of the Chinese people and began the period of their transition to socialism.

POSTSCRIPT: LINKS TO TODAY

“The Chinese people have stood up!” Mao Zedong said in proclaiming the new People’s Republic. Never had so great a change been so simply and tidily summed up. Involving a quarter of the world’s people, it made many millions in the other three quarters walk taller and see further. To the collapse of the colonial system it was a particular stimulus. Following the October 1917 Revolution in Russia it was the second great breach in the world imperialist system, a substantial shift of the global balance of forces toward socialism and national liberation.

Among the world’s nations, China at last stood in a position of equality. Soon she showed herself willing and able to defend her territory and rights against all odds. Never again a football in the international arena — she was becoming an increasingly outstanding player.

What the Taipings, the Reformers of 1898, and the patriotic bourgeois revolutionaries under Sun Yat-sen had all aimed at through a century of semi-colonial humiliation, the people’s revolution led by the Chinese Communist Party turned into fact. Though some major foreign governments long continued to yearn for a China they could dominate, after 1949 none, separately or in collusion, could force their will on her. This the new China proved in the teeth of great military, political and economic pressures, threats and provocations.

Menaces against her included the brandishing of nuclear weapons. In the Korean War of 1950-53, after General MacArthur’s offensive toward the

Korean-Chinese border had failed, their use was specifically envisioned in top U.S. quarters (one suggestion was to create a radioactive wasteland on that border.) On July 8, 1951, the *New York Times* predicted that if the projected Korean armistice came to naught, the “uppermost question” in Washington would be, “Should the United States insist that the United Nations* authorize the Allied commander to use every military weapon at his disposal to end the war, including the bombing of the enemy outside Korea” (i. e. in China) and... “the use of atomic weapons at the commander’s discretion.”**

During the Vietnam War of the 1960’s and 70’s the nuclear “option”, against both Vietnam and China, was again aired at high policy levels. Former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, in his revealing recent memoir*** quoted a secret official projection of 1967, “The use of tactical nuclear and area-denial-radiological-bacteriological-chemical weapons would probably be suggested at some point if the Chinese entered the war in Vietnam or Korea**** or if U.S. losses were running high while conventional efforts were not producing desired results.” Writing in the mid-1990’s, he added, “The United States war plans today provide for contingent use of nuclear weapons just as they did in the 1960’s. But the average American does not recognize this fact....”

During the Korean War of the early 1950’s China did not yet possess nuclear arms. By the Vietnam War, when she did, she publicly pledged never to be the first to use them. McNamara records that, while in office, he suggested a similar statement by Washington, but owing to objections there it was never made. All the U.S. nuclear options McNamara makes plain were not for response to nuclear attack, but for first use. His matter-of-fact mention of bacterial weapons confirms their presence in America’s arsenal — something

* China’s seat in the United Nations was then still usurped by the Chiang Kai-shek remnants on Taiwan and the U. S. -led war in Korea was waged under the U.N. flag.

** July 8, 1951 dispatch from *N. Y. Times* chief Washington correspondent, Arthur Krock, quoted by I.F. Stone, in his *Hidden History of the Korean War*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1952, pp. 282-3.

*** Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect*, New York, Vintage Books, 1996.

**** This mention of Korea referred to possible new war there.

not admitted earlier.

Pressure by the foreign nuclear monopoly came not from the U. S.A. alone. Premier Khrushchev of the Soviet Union, then still China's ally, would not share atomic military technology with her, but boasted during a 1959 flirtation with the then U. S. President, Eisenhower, that the two nuclear superpowers had only to waggle a finger for other states (China, etc.) to do their bidding.

In historical context, we can see the courage and importance, in both the short and the long term, of China's consistent refusal to be intimidated by nuclear arms. Both when she lacked them and after 1964 when her scientists and engineers independently produced them. Then she proclaimed that she was doing so — on a small scale — to end the nuclear monopoly of the superpowers — and proposed the destruction of nuclear arms worldwide, a course she is still urging today.

Ultimately, most of the old "great powers" which had so profited from the past easiness of trampling on the old China, had to establish relations with the revolution-born independent new China. Like it or not, there was no longer any alternative. Governments which had blocked trade with her authorized its resumption — in some cases reluctantly — on new, equal terms. And their business people proved eager to invest profitably in China's mounting economic growth, in conformity with her laws. If they wouldn't, competitors would leave them behind.

Foreign forces had expected the People's Republic to perish in infancy amid a host of problems. But they had gradually to face the fact that it was inaugurating a second Long March of the Chinese quarter of humankind to equality not just in name but in substance — in economy and technology — with the developed nations of the world. Of this, too, Mao had spoken in his inaugural speech. For a country so huge, so populous and with such an inherited lag, the undertaking was stupendous. Its aims were to move — on a socialist basis — from national poverty to modest well-being for all Chinese in some five decades starting from 1949 — and in another half-century to come abreast of living standards in the advanced modern economies. To this the

entire century of revolution was but a prelude.

Socially by 1952, only three years after the Liberation, China's peasants, by completing the land reform, put an end to the twenty and more centuries of their prolonged feudal bondage. By 1956, within only four more years, China had accomplished, step by step, the great and complex transition from private to socialist ownership in agriculture, and in her cities in industry and commerce — without losses in rural or urban production but on the contrary amid gains in both.

Deeply impressive, then and in retrospect, was the ending, also in the early 1950's, of the madly galloping inflation inherited from the last years of Kuomintang rule, when the purchasing power of China's currency had fallen a millionfold. It was accomplished not only amid the reconstruction of China's economy in ruins after two wars, anti-Japanese and civil, but in the midst of a third war — in Korea against the world's strongest superpower which sought to "roll back" the Chinese revolution. Just as repulsing that industrial and military giant raised the national self-respect of the Chinese people to a new high pitch, so the victory over inflation showed how massively they sided with the new order and saw it as their own. Economic measures alone — no matter how cleverly devised — would not have sufficed.

In a few short years, many foreign ideas about China ceased to fit her. Defenceless? She had repelled infinitely superior arms. Torn by civil wars? Internally she was at peace. Famine-stricken? More people were eating — and better — than ever before. Riddled with dirt and disease? There were vast clean-ups, and formerly rampant ills — smallpox, cholera, drug addiction, sexually transmitted maladies — virtually disappeared in the new China's first two decades. (Medical educators told me that they could find no cases of VD to show to their students.) Livelihood, medical care and education were guaranteed for growing numbers, as befits a socialist country, though general standards were still far from high. Corruption, rampant in old China, was no longer evident (disappointing foreign hopes that the Communists would be corroded by it upon entering such traditional sinkholes as Shanghai.) True, in decades to come, with the old China fading from memory, some of its moral

evils were to thrust up in new forms, or be re-imported from the outside. But no one could deny the good order and overall progress that came with the Liberation.

To build socialism in a huge land with a backward economy has proved far more complex than winning the national and democratic revolution. No wonder that in the almost half-century since 1949 besides impressive successes in the face of great odds there have been temporary setbacks — some resulting from errors, both “Left” and Right.

Truly phenomenal were the material advances brought about by China’s revolution as compared to the historically recent past. In this author’s youth, in the old China after World War I, virtually nothing made of steel was locally produced. Even plain pen nibs, and thumb-tacks strong enough to go into a wall, had to be imported from Britain and Germany. Safety matches, known as “foreign fire” came mostly from Sweden. Petroleum products, called “foreign oil,” were brought in by Standard Oil, Texaco or Royal Dutch Shell. Bicycles were British or German. Before 1949, the year of Liberation, not a single motor vehicle had been made, or indeed even assembled, in a Chinese factory. Agriculture, the basis of the nation’s economy and the occupation of nine-tenths of its people had as its chief tool the wooden plow.

By 1980 the new China was smelting 33 million tons of steel a year as compared with her pre-liberation annual peak of 1 million tons and the miserable 1949 output of some 160,000 or so tons to which wars had reduced it. Overall, she had multiplied her agricultural and industrial output (in terms of value) 16-fold. Industry’s share in this had risen from less than a third to three quarters. Production of steel had grown 200-fold, of coal 9-fold, the previously almost non-existent oil, chemical, capital-goods, automotive and aircraft industries by multiples of hundreds or even thousands. In agriculture thrice as much food grain was grown as in 1949, and seven times as much cotton.

Almost incredibly, in just sixteen more years — by 1996 — China had achieved the world’s record for that year in steel — tripling its output to over 100 million tons. This was part of what a commentator on American TV has

called “one of the most spectacular bursts of economic growth that any country has ever seen.” In other evidence of this rocket-like ascent, figures for 1995, as compared with 1985, showed the output of motor vehicles increasing tenfold — to 1.5 million, of power-generating equipment threefold and of cement (reflecting the scale of new construction) also threefold. Chemical fertilizer output, for China’s farmers, doubled. Reflecting increased consumption by the people, the production of washing machines and refrigerators went up each by 7 times, of home air-conditioners 55 times and of personal computers nearly 700 times. That of television sets only doubled since by 1985 almost most urban families and a quarter of rural ones already owned them.

Quantitatively, by 1996, China stood first in the world in industrial production of coal, steel, cement, cotton cloth and color television sets. Her agriculture produced more grain, cotton and meat each year than any other nation. And she was No. 2 internationally in generating electric power, chemical fertilizer and artificial fibers.

But reckoned in terms of per head of her huge population, the story was far different. Among 194 countries rated by the World Bank she was in the 161st place — still very far from catching up not only with developed countries but with many developing ones.

In her per capita income, consumption and welfare she has a tremendous amount to do, and her concentration on these tasks is of vast global significance. The market represented by her population — almost a quarter of the world’s — is bound to expand tremendously both for her own products and for needed imports from other countries. Experience demonstrates that it is among developed economies that world trade and investment grow continuously. A stable, prospering China is essential to more peace and development among the rest of humanity.

The previous material growth, impressive for the time, and the base for the new take-off, had not been enough, for several reasons:

First, China’s population by the century’s end would reach 1.3 billion — thrice that in 1949 — with the infant mortality rate falling below that in much

richer lands, and life expectancy rising from the pre-Liberation 35 years to about 70. These were great achievements of the revolution. But they also created a grave problem. If national output did not outpace the tripling of the population, the per capita supply to the people would not grow. Hence the emphasis not only on production but on family planning which after earlier neglect became compulsory (for all except the ethnic minorities).

Second, progress was slowed by bans on trade with China and transfers to her of technology imposed first by the United States and its partners, and later by the Soviet Union and its associated countries which had originally helped China industrially but by the 1960's had abandoned her.

Third, largely as a result of these pressures China's Communist Party and her government had adopted ultra-left policies which, while intended to hasten progress, actually sapped it.

Fourth, while China was constrained by these difficulties and unrealistic responses, some major capitalist countries — the United States, and particularly Germany and Japan — were making striking economic and technological gains. Despite China's previous economic progress, the gap between her and the leading industrial powers was widening.

Under such conditions the new China had to speed the performance of her second great task. Embarked on building socialism, she had to show perceptible ability to catch up with capitalism with its long history, and ultimately to surpass it. Without growing productivity and abundance, particularly in the vast and poor countryside with its hundreds of millions of farm people, the socialist principle — "from each according to his ability, to each according to his labor" — could not decisively improve livelihood. Much less could the ultimate communist goal — "to each according to his need" — come into sight. The objective laws of China's socialist revolution in her changing domestic situation (with its gains and lacks) and worldwide environment (improving with her repeatedly demonstrated ability to defend her independence) had still to be ascertained and tested in practice by her Communist Party. Just as the laws of her previous national-democratic revolution had been found through practice in its zigzag but certain advance to victory.

Both the “great leap forward” starting from the late 1950’s and the “cultural revolution” of the ’60s and ’70s were meant by Mao Zedong — who inspired them — to set off soaringly rapid advances — materially and morally toward those goals. Both had aroused great mass enthusiasm. A day of nationwide effort powered by such ideals, one dazzling “great leap” call proclaimed, could surpass twenty years at the previous pace. At a time when the country’s steel production was not yet up to 15 million tons, 300 million tons (!) was fantasized as soon attainable. For both industry and agriculture new targets were constantly set. Local leaders and activists competed in reporting them as fulfilled or over-fulfilled — fearing that otherwise they would be branded as laggard or lacking conviction. Though evoking unstinted support and effort, these campaigns undermined rather than enhanced the solid progress previously made but now sneered at as slow and plodding.

Especially harmful were the ultra-left policies during the “cultural revolution” and even more so the unscrupulous power-seeking by the “gang of four”. Not only in economics. Persons with no talents other than loud sloganeering or flattering adherence to favored factions were raised to high positions (“by helicopter” as the phrase went.) Many seasoned and knowledgeable political or economic leaders were humiliated, deposed, exiled, imprisoned and harassed — sometimes to death. Damage to education lost some ten years in the training of new experts. Wrecking of the Communist Party’s tested united front policies prevented the proper use of old experts. Post-Liberation equipment, reasonably modern as compared to that in old China, in turn became obsolete or derelict through record-chasing abuse. So the initial “late comer” advantage of the new China was giving way to technological aging — and the need for much re-tooling. Worst of all was the erosion from high-minded conviction to glum cynicism of many young people amid the increasingly empty shouting of political slogans and battles of factions. The “great leap” — despite its hardships — had not had this effect. The “cultural revolution” did.

The late Premier Zhou Enlai had tried hard to bring things down to earth by his advocacy of the “four modernizations.” But it was Deng Xiaoping,

who, on assuming leadership after many ups and downs, put through new policies which led to rapid material advance. In his view, since attempts to isolate China had failed, she should boldly relax some of the rigidities, internal and towards the outside, that had been based on the likelihood of new wars against her — and explore possibilities of economic relations with other countries from which both she and they had much to gain. In the late 1970's, after the damage done by the "gang of four" had been exposed and partially repaired, a new economic policy summed up as "reform, opening to the outside world, socialist modernization" was adopted under Deng's guidance.

Reform began in agriculture with the system of contracting land to families with compensation linked to guaranteed output — instead of working in teams on commune assignments. Farmers could choose what to produce, and sell on the market any produce in excess of what they had to deliver to the state at fixed prices. This stimulated rural efficiency, and brought increased income which quickly became apparent to the eye through striking improvements in village housing.

Next came urban and industrial reform. While retaining the leading role of state-owned enterprises — joint Sino-foreign and even wholly foreign firms, as well as privately owned ones were legalized — and all competed in a "socialist market economy." "Opening" included encouragement of investment and technological input from abroad. "Modernization" embraced renovation in technology and enterprise management. In both spheres, it was intended to learn what was useful from capitalism, not to learn capitalism itself. The aim was not to privatize everything but to seize the opportune time to maximally expand the material basis for "socialism with Chinese characteristics." Two decades earlier this would have been considered heretical — or impossible. In the actual development of this program, China's cities and towns became seas of construction and reconstruction. Foreign investment, spurred by profit opportunities, flowed in — not backed by privileges imposed and guaranteed by foreign arms but under conditions set by a China at last sovereign, independent and strong.

Alongside these new policies, targets were set to double national eco-

nomic output between 1979 and 1990, and re-double it by the century's end. Both were achieved — the second by 1996, four years ahead of schedule, though it was the more difficult, since the base line had itself doubled.

Investment from abroad at the start centered on simple export processing — attracted by lower labor costs. But it has gradually been redirected — since wages are not intended to always be low — towards technology transfer and infrastructural projects. Urban construction, which for a time centered on luxurious buildings and eateries to serve tourism, corporate offices and their foreign personnel — and imitative trends among Chinese officials and business people — is turning to improved apartments for ordinary townspeople and transport facilities like subways, bridges, toll expressways and other infrastructural items.

On the negative side, the large flow of money has led to a good deal of corruption among officials and non-officials with access to it — arousing popular anger and demand for countermeasures — which are being taken to stop the loopholes and punish offenders. Worship of foreign imports and tendencies to conspicuous consumption, which first surged, have begun to subside. Faced with competition many domestic products have improved in quality, styling and servicing — so that while imports continue and even increase, they are centering more on equipment and materials for modern production.

Rural income, until the mid-1980's, rose faster than urban earnings. Factories owned by villages and townships proliferated — and rural people became agricultural-industrial. In terms of knowledge, farm people became avid readers of scientific and technical manuals. Unfortunate, in the countryside, was a surge of wasteful spending on weddings, funerals and temple goods. Most recently, as rural income-growth was outpaced once more by that in the cities, more young people have been going there for more money. This brings a certain diversion of youthful energies from agriculture but, on the other hand, a back flow of urban remittances, knowledge and techniques to the countryside.

On the whole, the reform and opening are often likened to opening a

window — it lets in invigorating air, but also flies. Among the latter, was the reappearance, as mentioned above, of certain social evils and crimes. To screen these out requires long-term determination. Deng Xiaoping had called for simultaneous and equal grasp of two aspects of growth — material and ethical. In practice, the second has often been weaker. The disproportion is recognized and remedial action is increasing.

China's opening to the outside world is not the old "Open Door" — which was first blasted open by invaders' cannon and later came to mean that whatever privilege was forced out of her by one foreign predator she was compelled to extend to others as well. Today China, in full sovereignty, is her own door-keeper.

Now for some aspects of her international policy and conduct.

China keeps no troops or bases abroad. She has long decided to join no power-blocs. She does not dispatch expeditionary forces or establish bases abroad, engineer plots to work changes in the government of neighbor countries, or assassinations of leaders she may dislike. She is pledged by repeated statements at top levels not to enter alliances or ever play the superpower.

In the multi-polar world that has succeeded the bi-polar cold war, she wants to help build a new and peaceful international order — as the best environment for her own development and that of all countries. She does not see the future in terms of repeated juggling of military and political line-ups to readjust balances of power — on the old assumption that any country growing in prosperity or wealth is a potential enemy — or of the racist Huntington theory of "clash of civilizations." In word and deed, she strives for good relations with all states — whether large or small, and whatever their political or social systems. The essential premise is reciprocal respect for sovereignty and territory and non-meddling in each others' internal affairs.

The story of past aggressions against China, and her resistance to them, is told, as in this book not for recrimination, much less revenge — but for the future. History is real. Whoever ignores it is fated to repeat it — or suffer from its repetition. Only when past errors and injustices are seen as such, and as far

as possible corrected, can they cease to obstruct new, better relations.

China works for friendly links with all countries, especially with Third World and neighboring lands. With adjacent Russia and India, boundary disputes have been temporarily shelved while mutually beneficial ties are being built. Also sought are good relations with former violators of her vital rights. Thus she has expressed hope that trade and other dealings with Britain after the recovery of Hongkong will not shrink but expand and improve. With the United States, ties are still intermittently bedeviled by the issue of Taiwan — which U.S. strategists used to consider their “unsinkable aircraft carrier” and still see as an outpost — and various schemes to “contain” China. Yet, in the light of realism and common interest, there has been continuing progress, helpful to both, in exchanges between the world’s strongest economy and fastest-developing one. With Japan, links for the long range have been strengthened — despite disruptive attempts of right-wing forces there to embellish her past aggressions and paint China, their repeated past victim, as a menace — though no Chinese soldier has ever set foot in Japan, or intends to. Over many centuries the two countries, neighbors across narrow seas, have a much longer history of cultural kinship than of wars, and they have essentially complementary economies — giving them more reasons for getting along well than for strife. In all directions China strives for positive, not negative results.

In defiance of facts, the western media have engaged in persistent clamor against the new China, louder with each year. Whatever China does is attacked or smeared. If her population zooms she is “crowding the world.” If she decrees family planning she is “violating the rights of the unborn.” If her economy meets difficulties, her whole system is unworkable. If she borrows modern management skills from capitalist countries, she is sneered at as betraying her own revolution — as if those media ever wanted it to flourish. If she does not rush towards wholesale privatization, she is castigated as “hard line”. If any of her achievements are admitted, a big “BUT” of doubt or condemnations is almost invariably added.

Today, with her economy booming, she is exaggeratedly described as

already the world's third, second or even top economic powerhouse, soon to turn into a military danger. If her internal development is geographically uneven, she is diagnosed, with ill-disguised delight, as on the way to a split-up, regionally or ethnically. If she asserts her rights to what is hers by history and international law — Hongkong, Taiwan, Tibet — she is “invading.” If she talks back when attacked she is maligned as “nationalist” — though the same adjective was used as a compliment to the Kuomintang — while the new China, described only as “Red”, was stigmatized as having no national loyalty — only to international communism. Deafeningly and incessantly denounced were actions reluctantly taken by the new state against overthrow amid a tide of subversion of socialist societies which foreign capitalist governments and their media were uniformly lauding and whipping up. Thought-provoking is the contrast to the silence or applause of the same quarters during decades of killings, jailings and torture by the Kuomintang in old China.

On other counts the People's Republic is accused of being a prime polluter of the environment, by developed nations which have polluted it for centuries and even now try to dump their toxic garbage in China as elsewhere in the Third World. Measures of environmental protection which she has adopted far earlier in her industrial history than the economically developed nations did in theirs are hardly mentioned in the foreign press.

The most absurd current smear, to which all others are preludes, calls China a potential war menace. In fact, she recently reduced her armed forces by a million men, and her defense budget is a tenth of the U.S. government's. The world's second largest spender on arms is now Japan. This violates Japan's constitution which binds Japan, as a defeated aggressor in World War II, to renounce war — while she is obliged by treaty to assign no more than 1 per cent of her national expenditure to defense needs. Japan's moves toward military revival alarm nearby Asian lands where memories are fresh. They are hardly mentioned in countries which see a rearmed Japan as a present or future ally — against the invented “China threat”.

The supply of mudballs is unlimited, when one is thrown others lie ready to follow. Anyone doubting this has only to check the leading foreign media

over a period — and keep score. Objectors — and there are some — are outshouted by the anti-China chorus. It would be better to stop mud-slinging, and face some key facts.

Fact 1: The rise of the new China is an unquestionably positive development internationally.

One need only ask, for contrast, how things would stand if the old China were still here. Would she not still be liable to invasions, interventions, divisions, humiliations and endless sufferings such as afflicted her in the century from Opium War to Liberation? Would she not, inevitably, remain a bone of contention between foreign powers and a breeding ground — and at times actual arena — for their mutual battles? The 1904-5 war between Czarist Russia and Japan was fought on Chinese soil. In 1931 the fuse leading ultimately to World War II was ignited by the armed seizure of Northeast China by Japan. Ten years later, having invaded all China, Japan arrantly launched the Pacific War, which she wood hardly have dared to do had China been sovereign and strong. And the post-war U.S. campaigns in Korea and Vietnam were admittedly linked with hopes, of “rolling back” China’s revolution. Rolled back instead — because the new China was here to stay, were the assumptions of China’s weakness, and foreign dreams of its revival.

Fact 2: China herself, old and new, has no record of fighting wars on foreign soil with rivals in conquest. The strength created by her successful revolution helps cement international peace not only for her own people but, at a longer range, for others — including those of Japan and the U. S.A. — whose sons’ lives had been squandered in unjustified wars in Asia. It is a good thing for the world that the new China is determined and able to prevent reversion to the weakness of the old.

Fact 3: In disputes and differences between sovereign states, China has worked for the last quarter century for dialogue and adjustment as between equals, as opposed to hostile confrontation, and for developing mutual benefit while letting differences for which there are no quick solutions await a better climate for settlement. Even for knotty internal problems left over by past history she has created conditions for peaceful handling — as in the

“one country-two systems” policies for the recovery of former colonial enclaves — Hongkong and Macao — and for the unification of Taiwan with the mainland.

Taking these three solid truths as the base for efforts for the good of all is better than mud-slinging that promotes world tensions. Differences of viewpoint internationally are normal — but should be dealt with by mutual dialogue — not conflict. In today’s circumstances, won by progress over the past, this is possible. For peace and development — in the coming century — it is essential.

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